ALIEN AGENDA

WHY THEY CAME

WHY THEY STAYED

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By
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CHAPTER ONE

My name is James Sanford Tate. I am old but healthy. I am an only child. When I had friends they called me Jim. My wife died two years ago: cancer. Our only child was killed in Afghanistan, so I am without living relatives. I spent a career working for the government. Beginning at Naval Intelligence, my path wound through the Pentagon, the CIA, NSA, Congress, and groups you will never hear about. When I retired a black SUV followed me home. It was never far away. Three years ago I buried the family dog, a fifteen-year-old retriever named Crypto then vanished into Mexico and have been moving ever since. So far I have stayed ahead of the SUV, sometimes by only a few minutes. I expect someday that will change. While none of this has anything to do with you, my story does. I will begin in the middle.

It is around 0100 hours on 22 May, 1949. A fifty-seven-year-old man in room 1618 sits at a table reading and copying part of Ajax, a play by Sophocles. In the play, the battle of Troy is over. Ajax swears revenge because the armor of the fallen Achilles has been given to Odysseus instead of Ajax. The reader finds irony in the poetry.

He hears the man sleeping in the adjoining room. It is Dr. Robert Deen, assistant to his attending physician, Dr. George Raines. Dr. Deen mumbles something then rolls over and is silent. Dr. Deen's room shares a bathroom with room 1618 in the hospital.

The man hears something else. He stops writing in mid word, stands up, then walks to each of the three windows in his room, carefully checking to see they are securely locked. The windows in Room 1618 are large. Though the room is on the sixteenth floor,

he has lately added windows to a growing list of fears. Dr. Raines tells him that fear of windows is new to the psychiatric vernacular and does not yet have a name. He is not afraid of the windows themselves, but rather what is on the other side. He cannot share this with the good doctor. Not because Dr. Raines would think him more ill than he is, but because the doctor does not have the proper security clearance.

He pauses and looks down at the open book. What is Ajax to do? He has been loyal, he fought with the best. Only the dead sacrificed more, and his reward is humiliating betrayal. He sees only two choices: suicide or revenge.

The man puts his finger alongside his twice-broken nose and rubs the ancient wound. His tight lips barely move, and no one is there to see the slight smile he almost never shows. He knows what Ajax should have done.

His expression returns to its natural state: unreadable, devoid of humor, a hint of menace. He's feeling hungry and moves toward the kitchen across the hall. Hunger is a good sign. He has gained twelve pounds since checking into Bethesda Naval Hospital fifty days ago. He has also gained strength, physical and mental, and will soon play his own Ajax.

The kitchen is small. A refrigerator, sink, table with four chairs, and cupboard cabinets make it crowded. There is a short, iron radiator beneath a small window. The window is open. This is bad, he thinks, very bad.

Just after 1:00 AM the seventh-floor night nurse hears a thump from outside but does not check. At 1:50 AM the attendant checks Room 1618 and finds the patient missing. He is remarkably calm considering this is his first night working at the hospital. The staff is roused and the search begun.

At 1:50 AM they find the body directly below the kitchen window on the roof of a three-story wing of the hospital. One end of the robe's belt is knotted tightly around his neck. Within one hour the Maryland County Coroner confirms the death a suicide. The theory is he tied the other end of the belt to the radiator, crawled through the small window, and jumped. The knot at the radiator must have come undone and now America's first Secretary of Defense, James Forrestal, is dead. The Navy concluded an investigation into his death on 31 May, but refused to release any information until 12 October. Even then there was no mention of cause of death, only exoneration of the parties present. No one was to blame.

A few people whispered suspicions about Forrestal's death. His brother Henry had fought hard to visit him and, after several denials, finally won a brief visit then, after threatening legal action, made arrangements to take his brother to a private hospital on 24 May. Forrestal's long-time friend and priest, Monsignor Sheehy—also denied visitation rights—swears that, at Forrestal's funeral, the regular hospital orderly for Room 1618 told him in hushed tones the death was not an accident. Dr. Raines measured the length of cloth belt, the distance from the radiator to the window, and saw the absurdity of Forrestal attempting to hang himself in this particular location. He also knew about Forrestal's fear of windows. Even so, he kept his mouth shut.

Why James Vincent Forrestal suffered a nervous breakdown and committed suicide is not an official mystery. The stress of unifying the US military with severely restricted budgets in the face of the growing Soviet threat would have cracked most men.

Then again, Forrestal wasn't most men. A first-generation Irish-American who worked his way from a poor family in rural New York through Princeton University then to one of the top trading

houses on Wall Street had to have something special. Though living the good life, he went off to fight as a naval pilot in World War I. His superiors saw his dogged determination and intelligence, and he worked his way up the ranks, eventually becoming Secretary of the Navy, and finally ending his illustrious career as America's first Secretary of Defense, chosen so because he was exactly the right man at the right time to prepare the United States and the world to deal with something far worse than the growing Communist menace.

To know why such a man might have cracked, we need to start in 1943. We need to begin four years before President Truman radioed Washington from his plane instructing that Forrestal be sworn in immediately and be available to meet with Air Force General Twining on 23 September regarding an urgent matter.

CHAPTER TWO

I am involved in all of this because I had a very unusual security clearance.

Let's talk about security clearances. Just because a person has a high-level clearance doesn't mean they know much. It's sometimes the opposite. On assignment you may be expected to know every detail of a very narrow topic, but when your boss's bosses decide something you think is relevant isn't, then you cannot access what could be vital pieces to your puzzle. They call it compartmentalization. You are only allowed to know what you absolutely have to know. Someone above you is supposed to connect information between the compartments: the bigger the secrets, the more compartmentalization.

Compartmentalization is intended to prevent individuals from knowing more than their security clearance warrants; oaths are intended to keep people from revealing what they know. Everyone with a security clearance takes an oath. In theory, the oath-taker vows never to intentionally or unintentionally, under threat of death or during torture, break the oath. In a perfect world this would be sufficient. In our world it's a little more involved.

There are oaths and then there are oaths. If a Boy Scout breaks an oath, he might lose a merit badge; a postal worker who doesn't deliver in rain might lose his job, a doctor the license to practice. These are nonconsequential oaths. Swearing to serve in the US military puts a little bite in the oath. At this point, you accept military rules, regulations, and laws. If you are late for work and your boss is an asshole, you may be charged with Article Fifteen. Article Fifteen is a military catch-all infraction that basically says so long as the punishment is not too severe, your superior asshole

who happens not to like you can make you work extra duty, or you can choose a court-martial. If you do something really horrible, like fall asleep while guarding a trash dump, you might even serve prison time. If the trash dump is in a combat zone, you might be executed for napping.

An oath with teeth—that's exactly what is needed to prevent people working on secret projects from letting top-secret cats out of government bags. If convicted of a security breach, a person may be imprisoned or executed. This, of course, crawls through a legal labyrinth and threatens the possibility of further secrets being disclosed, and exposure and embarrassment to organizations that technically do not exist. Somewhere along the line someone realized a fleet of black SUVs is a more efficient way to dispense swift justice to oath breakers.

The boss of the SUVs, the Dispatcher, does not decide who an SUV visits. He merely accepts the call, evaluates the circumstances, decides which Driver to assign, and sets events in motion.

Black SUV Drivers come in all shapes and sizes. The team that visited James Forrestal on the 16th floor of the hospital were black operatives of the CIA, NSA, or any of a number of acronyms that do not exist in any documentation available to the public, congress or, in some cases, even presidents (plausible deniability is a precious thing in Senate hearings.) On the other end of the spectrum are the people who are not on agencies' payrolls. They are civilians, freelance thugs, hired by more important thugs who themselves are hired by voices on a phone. No one in this business accepts checks or credit cards. So the backbone of making sure people take oaths seriously is a fleet of SUVs.

The SUV system worked so well that one day, someone started worrying about the possibility of someone breaching security. They were apparently successful in making their point, and

authorized the Dispatcher to send a preemptive visit. The Secretary of Defense, Forrestal, did not actually break an oath. He died because someone was afraid he might. Forrestal is not the only case of preemptive strikes to preserve national secrets. Not by a long shot—across a grassy knoll.

Everyone who works with ultrasensitive information is aware of this system. They don't know the details. What they do know is if you have access to top secrets, you are watched. If you become a person of interest, your every movement and conversation is recorded. If you become a possible threat, you will probably be dead within a year.

How you die is based on how you live. It might be a heart attack, a traffic accident, an overdose, or a suicide. It depends on what works for you. Aren't they considerate? Only in the most extreme cases will someone be killed in a way that raises suspicions of foul play.

Let's say you work with ultrasensitive data and you are developing twangs of conscience. You think it is in the greater good to make this information public. Let's go a step further and say you recently found out you are dying of cancer and have a year to live. What's to stop you from coming forward? Nothing unless you have a family: children, grandchildren, spouses, parents, siblings, and pets—it's all roadkill to the men who drive SUVs.

No one knows about all this when they take their oath, but everyone figures it out. So at this level there are more than teeth in the oath.

In 1970 I was a Scribe. Scribes create white-paper documents and summaries when two or more compartmentalized top secrets are connected. Needless to say, there are never many Scribes.

In the old days we reported only to the Chairman of the Joint

Chiefs of Staff. Today it is much more political, the lines of power blurred. We can work almost anywhere there is a secure Internet connection, but in the 70s we worked mostly in the Pentagon or Langley with TDY assignments to military bases when we needed to see something firsthand. We travel under fake identities when we leave the United States.

Obviously, the few Scribes do not suffer as much compartmentalization. We do suffer constant scrutiny in every aspect of our lives. We have access to the most terrifying information available, and will be eliminated in the blink of an eye if suspected of dreaming about breaching the oath.

You might say being a Scribe is a dead-end job. Once you are assigned to it, there's no place else to go. Scribes go in, but they don't come out. It is a lifetime assignment.

I happened to be one of the Scribes on duty when I fell into this mess, of which Forrestal's death is only the tip of the iceberg.

Harry Parcel—a fellow Scribe—and I completed cleansing the Roswell documents when our boss called. I was given the new assignment for two reasons: I was up to speed on Roswell, and typed faster than Harry.

This begins the tale that led to what now seems the inconsequential death of James Forrestal. Now hear this.

The urgent matter that caused Forrestal to be hastily sworn in as Secretary of Defense in 1947 began during World War II with something called the Philadelphia Experiment. I was not part of that project, but nine years later was assigned to the official files as they related to the Roswell Incident.

There is almost always some truth in a myth. The popular Philadelphia Experiment legend contains only three truths: there was an experiment involving a ship in Philadelphia.

In 1955, Dr. Morris Jessup (he never obtained his PhD, but liked to be called doctor) wrote a book titled A Case for UFOs. A reader, Carlos Allende, wrote Jessup claiming while aboard a ship in August, 1943 he witnessed an experiment at the Philadelphia shipyard in which Destroyer 173, the USS Eldridge, was made to vanish in a green fog. When it reappeared 11 minutes later, the crew suffered nightmarish effects from invisibility. Over the next few years, Jessup worked with Allende (whose real name was Carl Allen). Jessup concluded the Philadelphia Experiment was a secret project—using Einstein's Unified Field Theory—that went wrong. In 1959, while driving to visit a friend, Jessup apparently and quite suddenly decided life was not so great, turned around, went back to his garage, ran a hose from his exhaust to inside his car, and died. Those inclined to conspiracy theories maintain Jessup's death was one of those early demises brought on by the men who drive black SUVs. Of course the alleged suicide added fuel to the strange tale, and when Charles Berlitz's book on the Philadelphia Experiment became a best seller the story went national. Dozens of articles and books, as well as television shows and movies, have covered the subject. Today, clear-thinking people recognize the Philadelphia Experiment story as a successful media hoax.

It doesn't take much research to discover the USS Eldridge was elsewhere during the time the experiment supposedly took place. Diehards claimed the Navy simply changed the Eldridge's log, but when numerous other ships' logs mentioned her in company, those conspiracy fans acknowledged maybe it was not the Eldridge but another ship. God knows how they came up with the name, but they claimed it was the Timmerman, another destroyer. The Timmerman was in Philadelphia as part of an experiment to amplify electronic degaussing being used to make ships hulls less likely to detonate magnetic mines.

I suspect an admiral or two sweated bullets when the Timmerman's name came up. I am told it is mentioned in some of Jessup's notes, and in his uncompleted manuscript—which officially never existed.

My new assignment was about to teach me what really happened. I sat at a table with pen, pad, typewriter, and a document box labeled Project Rainbow: Events Preceding 8 July, 1947.

Now hear this!

Prior to entering World War II, the US had a secret weapon—the magnetic torpedo. It targeted a ship's own magnetic field to detonate directly beneath the keel, accomplishing the destructive work of two or three torpedoes exploding upon striking the side of the target. By 1942, it was obvious German submarines had a similar weapon.

While the magnetically detonated torpedo remained classified until well after World War II, the existence of magnetic mines was common knowledge. Unlike contact mines, they did not have to touch the ship to detonate. The Navy wanted a way to neutralize both these weapons.

While mines were a threat to allied shipping, they were of minor concern compared to torpedoes. The numbers of ships lost to each type of weapon makes this extremely clear. The Navy had already demonstrated minor success against magnetic mines by degaussing ships, but it wasn't close to perfect, and it had no effect on torpedoes. The idea was to create one device that could counter both.

Making a ship invisible to a magnetic proximity fuse would certainly do the trick. If the ship's magnetic field could be eliminated, the torpedoes would speed beneath the surface until

they ran out of fuel then sink harmlessly to the bottom. All the same, the method would be extremely expensive if it were intended to protect thousands of small freighters, each of which would have to be fitted with its own electronic array of magnetic invisibility equipment.

The Navy took a more efficient approach. We wanted to fit warships with an electrical apparatus that projected a strong magnetic field some distance around the ship—a field strong enough to detonate magnetic proximity fuses a hundred yards from intended targets. If this idea worked, destroyer escorts—ringing a convoy of dozens of merchant vessels—could protect the entire group from the threat of magnetic torpedoes at a fraction of the cost of fitting every merchantman with its own device.

With this in mind, the Navy enlisted the best brains in the country, including Mr. $E=MC^2$ himself. But the team's real genius was Richard Feynman (pronounced Fineman). He was a brilliant young physicist working with the Manhattan Project to develop the atomic bomb. Einstein said he would be invaluable on the Rainbow team. Einstein received what he wanted, and he wanted Feynman because when it came to electronics there was no one better. After the war, Feynman won a Noble Prize for his work on quantum electrodynamics.

On 28 March, 1943 the team from Rainbow presented their theory and recommendations for stage-one experiments. The Navy went to work obtaining or creating machines, and began looking for a ship: enter the USS Hambleton.

The destroyer was designated DD-455, and entered service at Norfolk, Virginia on 31 January, 1942. 28 October she joined the Western Naval Task Force and participated in the invasion of French Morocco. On 11 November a U-boat torpedo struck the Hambleton amidships on the port side. Damage control parties kept

her afloat, and she was towed to Casablanca for emergency repairs. Seabees cut the ship in two, removed a 40-foot section of damaged hull, then joined the two remaining halves together. Tended by a skeleton crew and escorted by a tug, Hambleton reached Boston on 28 June, 1943 for permanent repairs.

There the Hambleton received special attention. Under the guise of rushing this heroic ship back into the war, for propaganda reasons her repairs went round the clock, with extra workers to further accelerate the work. In the finishing stages of repair she was fitted with unusual electrical machinery.

On the night of 1 August, 1943, still missing 40 feet of length, she left Boston and proceeded to Philadelphia. She had been temporarily renamed and numbered: the USS Timmaron, DE-173. On 12 August, about the time Carl Allen—a.k.a. Carlos Allende—claims to have seen the Eldridge vanish, he may have seen a greenish coronal effect caused by her massive generators. Or more likely he wasn't there, and remembered the date and ship's name wrong because he heard the story secondhand.

Either way, the experiment failed. A series of electronic proximity fuses suspended at various depths beneath the Hambleton's keel failed to detonate. Perhaps the fuses were not sensitive enough, but this failure was of little consequence. Something else happened. The ship was surrounded by devices measuring the magnetic field during the experiment. Each magnetometer reported the exact readings. As the generators increased power, the field's strength grew outward from the ship, then—as the power reached maximum—the field collapsed into itself.

Einstein and Feynman understood the theoretical ramifications, and recommended Project Rainbow be placed in Alamogordo, New Mexico with the Manhattan Project, where further research

would be conducted as progress on the atomic bomb permitted.

The Hambleton sailed back to Boston to complete repairs. She was assigned a new crew and sent to serve in the Mediterranean before D-Day and no one was the wiser.

Work on the atomic bomb was the priority. Almost nothing happened with Rainbow until after the A-bomb was tested. On 16 July, 1945, Gadget—the nickname for the first A-bomb—was detonated at what became known as the White Sands Missile Range. One week later a team was officially assigned to explore the results of the Project Rainbow Experiment.

Richard Feynman was a physicist's physicist. While he won a Noble Prize for quantum electrodynamics, he was also a genius in other areas, like particle theory and the growing field of quantum physics. But like many of the other prominent members of the Manhattan Project, he seemed to have had his fill of secret projects, and returned to universities and private research. Feynman did not stay with Project Rainbow to completion, but he contributed heavily in solving theoretical problems.

On 6 January, 1947, the Project Rainbow team tested the device unexpectedly born from the Philadelphia Experiment. Looking like a cannon of metal rods wrapped in dense coils, it was intended to project a focused, electromagnetic field that disabled electronic circuitry the same way as the electromagnetic pulse (EMP) from a nuclear explosion, but without all the fire and death. It worked. While it would be years before it was perfected, the team increased its power, range, and accuracy over the next few months.

Then one day in June some scientists decided to play with the new gun. It went off and triggered the biggest event in human history.

CHAPTER THREE

If the Philadelphia Experiment was media dynamite, the Roswell Incident detonated a nuclear blast for UFO phenomena. For every word printed about the Philadelphia Experiment, ten thousand have appeared about Roswell.

So much has been written, recorded, and filmed that it is impossible to sort out the details of the events on and after Friday, 20 June, 1947. Between conspiracy theorists, UFO nuts, and government-issued disinformation, there are too many trails crisscrossing too many muddied creeks for even the best bloodhound to follow. But then again, there is always some truth to every myth.

Creating the official summary and cleansing the Roswell Incident documents led to my work on the Philadelphia Experiment. I was never personally involved in any of the activities surrounding Roswell, but it is possible that I know more about what really happened than any person alive. One of the reasons for this is that the 1947 versions of black SUVs rolled up heavy mileage over the next three years. Now hear this!

Around four o'clock on the afternoon of 20 June, 1947, two technicians tasked with recovering the truck-mounted Project Rainbow EMF Projector, and another truck fitted with generators, decided to play. They cranked up the power and fired a series of beams skyward.

After fifteen minutes, the junior geniuses shut the projector down and secured the equipment for the drive to the garage. They were oblivious to the consequences of their fun until Friday, 8 August, when CIC investigators cornered them in their lab.

It had taken over a month of strange occurrences and high

alerts for anyone to suspect activities at Alamogordo had anything to do with the Roswell Incident. Once the Alamogordo think tank connected the Roswell crash with Project Rainbow, it did not take long to determine the projector had a missing fifteen minutes of use in the log, which led to the fun seekers.

Ninety-six hours later, they were allowed to go home: unwashed, unshaven, but not unwarned. They were never allowed to speak of the incident again. The irony is that they had no idea why they were questioned. Other than the coronal and charged effects of close proximity to the electromagnetic device, they had seen or heard nothing. If the Minutemen of Concord fired the shot heard round the world, these guys fired the shot heard through the multiverse. Oh yes, during the next three years, both died of stroke. They would have lived longer had it not been for a rancher named Mac Brazel.

Following a night of thunderstorms, Mac Brazel went out on Saturday, 21 June to check the livestock on the Foster Ranch in Corona, New Mexico, 75 miles northwest of Roswell. Mac found a large area containing debris, picked some up, and carried it back to the line house he lived in while working for Mr. Foster. The next day he visited his nearest neighbors, the Proctors, and told them about the debris. They told him he should show the material to Chaves county sheriff, George Wilcox.

Priorities in Corona are different than those in big cities. It was a long trip to the sheriff's office, so Brazel decided to wait until after the July 4 holiday and see the sheriff while in Roswell on other business.

On the afternoon of 6 July, Brazel shows the debris and tells his story to Sheriff Wilcox. Wilcox calls the nearby Roswell Army Airfield and conveys the story to Major Jesse Marcel, base intelligence officer. Marcel's boss, Colonel William Blanchard,

authorizes Marcel to investigate the field of debris. 7 July, accompanied by Captain Sheridan Cavitt and Mac Brazel, Marcel leads the group in gathering up as much of the debris as possible, then returns to Roswell Army Airfield. 8 July, Colonel Blanchard calls General Roger Ramey to initiate a search and recovery operation on the Foster Ranch. Later, Blanchard authorizes a press release announcing the military has found a crashed flying disc.

Within minutes of this news reaching the Pentagon, General Ramey receives a call from General Twining telling him exactly what to say and do. The press release is retracted with a new story —the debris is from a weather balloon.

A twenty-mile square centered in the Foster Ranch debris field is cordoned off by military police on 9 July.

11-25 July the military conducts a search-and-recovery operation using aircraft, military intelligence officers, and a handful of civilians from Alamogordo.

Several truckloads of recovered material arrive at Alamogordo on 27 July. The material is processed, divided into four groups, and dispersed under secrecy.

Group one consists of pieces that may potentially be debris from weapons. This is flown to Forth Worth, Texas, placed on a transport aircraft, and flown to Wright-Patterson Field in Ohio. The second group incorporates all pieces that have higher radiation readings than the wreckage in general. This material is trucked to Las Vegas Army Airfield.

Group three is composed of wreckage consistent with aerodynamics and may have been essential to flight. It found its way to Camp Cooke, located 150 miles north of Los Angeles. The last group remains at Alamogordo and includes items from across the other groups, as well as anything ‘of scientific interest.’

Knowing to which place each group was taken is significant.

Wright-Patterson Field eventually became Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, and is the primary place where captured enemy aircraft are studied and new weapons are conceived, designed, built, and tested.

Las Vegas Army Airfield was part of the Nevada Test Site (NTS), where radiation from nuclear tests was studied and measured. It consisted of 14,000 square acres and 10,000 square miles of restricted airspace. The base had been deactivated in January, 1947 but the NTS portion remained operational. Mysteriously, the base was reactivated in January, 1948 and renamed Nellis Air Force Base in 1950.

Camp Cooke, California contained the military's highest maximum-security prison. When Camp Cooke was deactivated in 1946, the prison continued to house the military's most recalcitrant prisoners. Camp Cooke was also reactivated in August, 1950 as Cooke Air Force Base and given the mission and designation as Air Research & Development Command. One of its primary objectives included atypical and non-winged flight. It was renamed Vandenberg Air Force Base in 1958.

Between July, 1947 and the end of 1950, these bases each received numerous shipments of secret cargo.

Thus ends the official report of the Roswell Incident. It is worth noting that Major Marcel, the Roswell Army Airfield intelligence officer who 'confused' the debris of a downed weather balloon with that of a flying saucer, received the highest possible marks on his efficiency reports from Colonel Blanchard and General Ramey in 1948. In 1949 he received notice of transfer to work in the Pentagon's top secret Special Weapons Program. It would seem the military was very forgiving of his terrible mistake.

This is also the conclusion of the first box of documents' contents. The second report—titled Project Rainbow Phase II: Events from July 1947 to August 1952—begins a new chapter in human history.

CHAPTER FOUR

Twenty-four hours after interrogating the lads who played with the EMF projector, radar installation crews and equipment were on their way to Roswell Field. In less than a week, field radar units were up and running at Roswell, Corona, and Alamogordo.

Prior to World War II, radar was not very accurate or dependable. It was so crude the radar at Pearl Harbor misinterpreted hundreds of Japanese attack craft as a small flight of B-17s. One thing about war, it's the best jump-start to improve weapons and defenses. By the end of World War II, antisubmarine aircraft were fitted with three-centimeter radar that could pick up a one-foot diameter U-boat snorkel riding ten feet above choppy waves. Granted, radar in 1947 was nowhere near what it is today, but it could distinguish targets of different sizes, speeds, and altitudes.

Throughout 1947, the military radar stations in and around the Four Corners states made dozens of contacts with unknown objects. Military pilots had reported numerous sightings of disc, cylindrical, and triangular-shaped craft. While UFOs were officially born when civilian pilot Kenneth Arnold reported seeing flying saucers near Mt. Rainer in June, 1947, the military had been scratching their heads for months over the mysterious invaders of US airspace.

And not just any airspace: Alamogordo and the atomic-bomb test site were secret enough, but at the time, the squadron of B-29s stationed at Roswell Field possessed the world's only nuclear arsenal.

Once operational, the radar at all three locations began picking up images that suddenly appeared on their screen at mid distances,

traveled at speeds up to six times military aircraft capabilities, made impossible maneuvers, and vanished mid screen as mysteriously as they appeared. Many of the contacts moved in a ‘Z’ pattern while on radar.

The ‘Z’ flight pattern is a standard procedure for searching an area with a single aircraft. The boys in Washington knew what they searched for. They had it and planned to find more.

The brains of the Manhattan Project were called upon to theorize what was taking place. The teams still working at Alamogordo worked in groups; the others, who had dispersed to more normal lives of science, worked remotely and communicated through military couriers and liaisons. Not surprisingly, it was Richard Feynman who provided the connection.

The brain trust began with these questions: what are they? Why are they here now? Why do they cluster in this area?

After examining the evidence, Feynman formed a theory. Feynman’s answers to the primary questions were dead-on.

The craft, manned or unmanned, were from a place—or places—other than Earth.

Feynman’s answers to the other questions perfectly connected all three. Based on the number of craft and their capabilities, he reasoned that the crafts’ owners were not new to existence. Because they previously existed and clearly had the ability to visit our planet, but heretofore had not visited as often or as openly, something changed to attract them. Feynman felt the change was obvious—the detonation of nuclear explosives.

In 1947 there had been only five: the Trinity Test of the Manhattan Project, the destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and two test blasts in the Pacific during Operation Crossroads. In addition to offering a greater threat to global stability than any

other manmade event in human history, the unleashed atom touched the fabric of our universe. It was the effect on the universal fabric that Feynman believed attracted the visitors who flashed on and off radar screens and zipped 'Z' patterns over a desert containing the world's most active nuclear program.

So, they were not from this Earth, they were here now because of nuclear explosions, and they were in this area because of active nuclear research and programs. Just as everyone in Alamogordo was collectively nodding yes and wondering how Richard always made things look so obvious and easy, Feynman bowed out of active participation in the project.

The next questions for Team Genius were: what exactly about nuclear explosives attracted the intruders? Where did they most likely come from?

Again, answering the first question led to answering the second. A nuclear detonation is an instant release of energy. The energy manifests in an explosion as light, heat, sound, shockwave, and radiation. While catastrophic, all are regional to a degree. None provide a global impact. The light, heat, and radiation may be detectible within our solar system. Even if an element of the nuclear explosions on Earth could have been detected on the nearest star, it would have taken four years to reach there. Since the bombs were detonated in 1945 and 1946, the earliest any sign could have been noticed would have been 1949. So unless the owners of the uninvited vehicles could travel back in time, their appearance in 1947 made it seem unlikely they were stellar neighbors.

A collective 'hmmmmm?' sounded among the scientists as this realization set in. Then the Rainbow Team had a eureka moment. There is another element of a nuclear explosion: a high intensity burst of electromagnetism. How and why would this attract the

visitors?

In 1947, quantum physics was in its infancy. Only the brightest of the bright could wrap their minds around the concepts that would eventually evolve from theories to mathematical models to experiments providing proof.

The short history is this: in the 1930s, physicists gained the ability to test atomic particles. The problem was that, when tested, atomic particles weren't. What were thought to be particles acted like waves, not matter. When tested as waves, they reverted to behaving like a particle. It seemed they shared their time between the two states, or in quantum speak—particle duality.

As time passed and science gained the ability to refine atomic particle testing, it was determined that, whether particle or wave, they didn't exist at all. Well, they did exist, and then they didn't. They blinked in and out of existence. This posed an enormous question to the brilliant people who studied the world of tiny atoms—where did they go?

During this same period of time, another group of brilliant people, who pondered the universe populated with billions of galaxies each filled with billions of stars, wondered, "Where did all this matter come from?"

Nearly fifty years after the events of 1947, the theories of these people, who studied the foundation of existence from opposite ends of the telescope, coalesced in an unsettling realization: for our universe to behave as it does, other universes must exist parallel to our own.

This story is not about quantum physics, string theory, super gravity, or the M-theory. The truth is we really don't have many more facts than we did during the lives of the Manhattan Project team members. Today, top theorists argue passionately whether all

things exist in ten or eleven dimensions. Some espouse, while others poo-poo, the concept of super gravity leaking between universes. Meanwhile, genius-level math proves 'everything' exists in a dimension filled with membranes that bump into each other as they undulate, and that every bump results in a new Big Bang that creates a new universe within the membrane. But just because scientists believe something, it ain't necessarily so.

Here is what is so.

There are other dimensions, lots of them. There are more parallel worlds than there are angels on the head of a pin. The visitors at Roswell are from one of them. As fate often does, the ship at Roswell was in the wrong place at the wrong time.

The same Robert Oppenheimer who headed the Manhattan Project created the mathematic model in the 1930s that proved the probability of the existence of black holes. In addition to heading up the world's first nuclear-bomb program, Oppenheimer established himself as a leader in quantum field theory, relativistic quantum mechanics, and quantum tunneling. As destiny often does, he was the right person at the right place at the right time.

When Project Rainbow's team understood their EMF Projector may have been responsible for downing the alien craft, they called upon Oppenheimer and Feynman again for help.

Project Rainbow's projector beamed an inverse—or collapsed—electromagnetic field. Sometimes when a super-dense star collapses, it creates a black hole that emits an unbelievably powerful gravitational field, which sucks everything, including light, into it. The projector created something like a magnetic hole that would totally stop, disrupt, or burn out any electrical activity through which it passed. It passed through a UFO that afternoon in late June, 1947.

From the moment the military realized it had an effective weapon against the invaders of US airspace, the fear vaporized. The government decided it would not be content with the wreckage and salvage of one downed UFO. From 1947 to 1950, more Rainbow Projectors were built, and more alien craft were shot down for examination.

While UFO nuts list hundreds of 'known' crash sites, there have only been seven resulting from Rainbow Projectors.

The original was at Roswell. We recovered wreckage of two vehicles: a mother ship, and what appeared to be the UFO version of a lifeboat. No biological life-forms—deceased or otherwise—were found at the main crash site. Three deceased alien bodies were recovered near the lifeboat.

The second was a third type of craft, larger than the Roswell mother ship. It was the original projector's second kill, and crashed near White Sands, New Mexico on 25 March, 1948. In addition to the wreckage, the recovery team recovered six corpses.

A third went down on 8 July, 1948 inside Mexico near Laredo, Texas. Same type of craft found at Roswell, but no lifeboat or bodies were recovered.

Number four crash-landed on 24 June, 1949 near Cloudcroft, New Mexico, about 25 miles east of Alamogordo. The Roswell vehicle type, with lifeboat, contained two deceased and one live occupant. The crash survivor died within hours of discovery.

The fifth vehicle was recovered from Death Valley, California, 19 August, 1949. Roswell type vehicle, no lifeboat, and no bodies found.

The final two went down at sea. The aircraft carrier, USS Franklin Delano Roosevelt, was fitted with a Rainbow Projector and has radar confirmation of downing two alien craft in the

Atlantic Ocean.

For a while it was like shooting ducks. Then on 19 July, 1952, the ducks shot back.

CHAPTER FIVE

Once officials briefed Truman about Roswell and the belief we had an effective weapon, the government sprang into action. Have you heard of Majestic 12? Forget about it. It's 90 percent false. The kernel of truth in this myth is that President Truman was made aware of the situation and authorized a group to study it.

The group was not majestic, and it was not twelve. Twelve civilian government officials can't keep a secret, even in those post World War II days when America was flush with patriotism. Truman did instigate the creation of a public committee to study some handpicked reports of flying saucers and consider 'theories' and hypothetical cases. Known as the Robertson Panel or Report, a group of preselected, skeptical scientists convened 14-18 January, 1953 and were spoon-fed information by their CIA hosts. This august body quickly concluded UFOs were natural phenomena and a waste of time. But even this group was not created until after the ducks started returning fire.

Some of the men who sat on Truman's real committee are named in Majestic Twelve documents; most are not. The only people beside Truman that knew the entire truth were:

Secretary of Defense James Forrestal (Sworn in on 19 September 1947) (Kenneth C. Royal, was acting Secretary of War from 19 July 1947 until Forrestal was sworn in but was intentionally excluded from any knowledge of the Roswell Incident)

Secretary of State George Marshall

Secretary of State Dean Acheson (became Secretary of State in 1949)

Director of Mutual Security Averill Harriman (position created in 1951)

Chief of Staff USAF General Nathan Farragut Twining (Truman had promoted Twining to this position and ask him to make a study of UFOs. The preliminary finding of this study was presented to the select few on September 23, 1947.)

The final people included in this sensitive information were the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Below that level, compartmentalization created walls branching information into ever-narrowing streams, so groups and individuals had little hope of even guessing the scope of their work.

From this point, when I say government, I refer to the complex machine of political, judicial, bureaucratic, industrial, and military gears that wear down then crush all obstacles. When I say America, I speak of the people and private businesses that pay for the government's pranks and shenanigans in exchange for a few highways.

Almost all of the documents supporting the existence of MJ-12 are fakes—some faked by wannabe investigators and some faked by the government to widen the false trail.

The Majestic Twelve name is probably a derivative of something else that occurred at this time. During this period, a new security clearance was born to deal with UFOs. It was called Magic. It was not necessarily the highest level, but you had to be cleared to see documents bearing the Magic level regardless of what other clearance you had. The intention was that no one would be made privy to Magic information without a compelling need to know, and a bare minimum of people could access Magic information at any one time.

The researchers working on the downed space vehicles were

slowly learning and discovering new technologies. Project Rainbow became the highest priority and most secret program since the Manhattan Project. All in all, the UFO scare was turning out to be a pretty good thing. That is until the UFOs came calling on Washington.

CHAPTER SIX

June, 1952. New flying saucer sightings are down to less than 20 percent of what they were between the Roswell Incident and 1949. It's a good sign for the few who know the truth. There's no need for anyone to panic; work is progressing on reverse engineering components from downed UFOs. The ointment contains only one small fly: for the last two years, the Rainbow Projectors have failed to nail another alien intruder. No one is sure why. The number of aliens appearing on radar dropped off significantly in 1949, but even so, when one appears within range of a projector, it takes evasive action and is impossible to hit. But no one is worried. The boys at Alamogordo are staying up late to electronically connect the projectors to radar. It is only a matter of time before the balance of power swings back to our side.

Then, five years to the day the Roswell incident began, the visitors return in numbers. They come bearing an anniversary gift.

By mid June, the Air Force's Project Blue Book investigation is receiving the highest number of reports ever. By July, UFOs are observed in every part of the USA.

In Ogdensburg, New York, groups of residents watched three jet planes circle and attempt to close with three shining objects for twenty minutes until the three objects simply vanished. Airport control towers begin picking the blips up on radar. Cleveland, Chicago, and Los Angeles all have numerous radar and visual sightings of objects that move too fast or too slow; that are too large; that make impossible maneuvers. Military, commercial, and private pilots see the strange ships more frequently than ever before. While they are everywhere, they seem clustered on the east coast a little too close to the nation's capitol.

Those in the know sit in uncomfortable silence, waiting for a shoe to drop from the sky. They don't wait long.

2108 Hours, 19 July, 1952

Four men work in the top floor of the dimly lit, glass-ringed control tower of the Washington National Airport. They operate the local radar, and direct airplanes taking off or making final approaches. Two floors below, a team of eleven men use the Air Route Traffic Control radar to manage all other aircraft within100 miles. It is a slow time, and ten of the men are out of the radar room on break. As Ed Nugent mans the 24-inch scope, he glances at the clock, noting his break is in 22 minutes. When he looks back, seven new blips are on his radar screen. He studies them for a moment. They move in formation, not very fast, between 100 and 130 MPH at an altitude of approximately 1,700 feet. At 9:10 they do something impossible. Nugent estimates while maintaining airspeed of 130 MPH, they gain altitude at the rate of 35,000 feet per minute.

Ed rubs his eyes in disbelief. He checks the calibration of his equipment. Everything is fine. He calls his boss, Harry Barnes, and says jokingly, but only half, "Here's a formation of flying saucers, Harry."

Harry steps in, looks at the screen, and calls the technician in to check the equipment. Before he gives the thumbs-up, the rest of the men have come back in and are clustered around the three other screens in the room.

Harry picks up the intercom phone and buzzes the control tower.

Before Harry can say anything, Joe Zacko, another air-traffic controller working the short-range radar in the room above, asks, "Are you guys seeing what we are seeing? We've got seven on

scope."

Howard Conklin stands up and looks out the tower windows in the direction indicated by the radar. "There they are! There they are!" he says, pointing at the glowing objects that have changed course and are headed toward Andrews Air Force base.

Harry is up the stairs and in the control room in seconds. Seeing the objects, he picks up the intercom phone again and buzzes the air-traffic-control tower at Andrews.

Andrews' control tower has the objects, altitude 2,000 feet, moving toward them at approximately 150 MPH. Nervous telephone and radio communications fly between night-duty officers. No one wants to make a decision. Those who have been in the military understand—never wake up a general for something that can wait until tomorrow. Finally, around midnight, phones begin ringing up the chain of command.

At 1:30 AM, two F-94 Lockheed Starfires, America's hottest in-service jet, scramble to provide close-visuals contact with the lights in the sky. The fighters streak over Washington. When they are five miles from their prey, the targets vanish from visual and radar. The jets circle for thirty minutes, then return to base.

At 2:30 AM, the objects appear again on radar, but without visual confirmation. By 3:00 AM they disappear for the night.

Below is the transcript of the article that appeared Monday, July 22, 1952 in the Washington Post (the newspaper article erroneously thought there had been eight UFOs):

8 on Screen; Planes Sight Odd Lights

The Air Force disclosed last night it has received reports of an eerie visitation by unidentified aerial objects—perhaps a new type of "flying saucer"—over the vicinity of the nation's capitol.

For the first time, so far as known, the objects were picked up

by radar—indicating actual substance rather than mere light.

They were described as traveling at a slow 100 to 130 miles per hour—instead of the incredible speed attributed to earlier saucers—although at times they shot up and down.

The objects also were described as hovering in one position. The Air Force said no planes were sent out in an attempt to intercept the objects, and no sightings were reported by Operation Skywatch, the round-the-clock Civilian Defense ground observer operation now underway.

Preliminary Report

The Air Force said it has received only a preliminary report, and therefore does not know why no attempt at interception was made.

The air-traffic-control center at Washington National Airport reported its radar operators picked up eight of the slow-moving objects about midnight last Saturday. They were flying in the vicinity of nearby Andrews Air Force Base.

The center said Capital Airlines Flight 807, southbound from National Airport, reported seeing seven objects between Washington and Martinsburg, W. Va., at 3:15 AM the same night.

Capital Airlines said the pilot, Capt. "Casey" Pierman of Detroit, 17 years with the company, described the objects in these words: "They were like falling stars without tails."

Picked up Blips

Company officials said the airport picked up radar "blips"—contact with aerial objects—and asked Capt. Pierman to keep a watch out for any unusual objects in the sky.

Shortly thereafter, officials said, Pierman reported back to the dispatcher's tower that he had spotted a group of objects. Pierman,

then flying at normal cruising speed of 180 to 200 MPH, reported the objects were traveling with "tremendous vertical speed"—moving rapidly up and down—and then suddenly changing pace until they seemed to hang motionless in the sky.

Officials said Pierman made only a routine report of the incident.

The eight objects picked up by Air Force radar were said to be traveling slightly faster than 100 MPH. The airport traffic-control center, said another airliner, Capital-National Airlines Flight 610, reported observing a light following it from Herndon, Va. about 20 airline miles from Washington, to within four miles of National Airport. "This information has been related to the proper Air Force authorities and the Air Force is investigating the matter," the announcement said. Earlier, the Air Force said it is receiving flying saucer reports this summer at a rate of 100 a month, higher than at any time since the initial flood of sightings in 1947.

END OF WASHINGTON POST, 22 JULY, 1952 ARTICLE

You can imagine the buzz running through Washington when the article appeared. This was not the first story the Post had run in recent days about flying saucers. There had been a rash of sightings from Maine to Virginia since the middle of June. Now they were flying in formation above our nation’s capitol.

Calls poured in to the Air Technical Intelligence Center, one of the Air Force's most highly specialized intelligence units, and headquarters of the Air Force’s UFO investigation. Embarrassingly, the ATIC’s first inkling of the UFO radar contacts was the article in the morning paper. No one involved in the incident had called them. Rather than provide a ‘no comment’, they rushed the Air Force’s senior UFO investigator to the scene.

Captain Edward J. Ruppelt was the first to head up the Air

Force's Project Blue Book. Blue Book evolved from the more ad hoc temporary investigations into UFOs: Projects Sign and Grudge.

Project Blue Book was launched in late 1947, and by 1952 Captain Ruppelt commanded four officers—two airmen and two civilians—on his permanent staff. Three scientists were under full-time contracts for Blue Book, and Major Fournet was the project liaison at the Pentagon. The vast majority of actual investigations were carried out by local intelligence officers all over the world.

Project Blue Book's process when a sighting came in was that one or two local officers interviewed the witness and filled out a rather lengthy survey form developed for this specific purpose. The completed form not only helped the staff at Blue Book headquarters group reports by categories and subcategories, it also contained a number of booby-trap questions to establish the witness's honesty and credibility. Aircraft pilots, radar operators, and military personnel were at the top of the credibility ladder, so virtually all reports from these sources found their way to Wright Patterson, home to the project.

In the case of less-credible witnesses, the field investigators used the survey and their interview to determine if the sighting was worth sending to headquarters.

In the four years between Project Blue Book's creation and the summer of 1952, headquarters had processed 615 of these reports.

The team quickly learned that, by checking with military, government, and university agencies involved in aircraft, astronomy, weather, and scientific balloons, over 60 percent of the reports received had natural explanations. The rest were assigned a priority for a team member to follow up with phone calls or face-to-face interviews.

Up until 1952, there was no real sense of urgency for Project Blue Book to produce answers. Their mission was to investigate sightings. If they determined the sighting had a natural explanation, they made the information available. If the sighting could not be explained, it was kept secret. The nature of this process made it seem that Project Blue Book's goal was to discredit all UFO sightings, as those were the only ones they talked about.

The lack of urgency was about to change.

By early June, the increased UFO activity around major cities and military bases made officials jumpy. It was determined that Blue Book needed to be moved up the organizational chart, and was elevated from group to section level to allow more support and clout within ATIC.

In June and July of 1952, field agents sent 717 reports to Ruppelt's team, more than they had processed in the previous four years.

The irony of all this is that no one associated with ATIC or Blue Book knew anything about the truth of Roswell, the projector, or what was going on at Truman's behest. The government's primary UFO investigative body was completely in the dark. Compartmentalization is a beautiful thing.

Captain Ruppelt and his boss, Colonel Donald Bower, arrive in Washington to give a briefing at the Pentagon. The briefing does not go well.

A colonel from Air Defense Command is present. After sitting through Ruppelt's explanation of how they rank and evaluate reports, and the statistical analysis of sightings, the colonel from ADC presses his point.

As the department title implies, the ADC is tasked with defending our skies. In the last few weeks there have been an

unsettling number of encounters between Air Force jet fighters and UFOs. The jets try to close the distance to their targets to obtain in-focus, definitive film from their nose cameras. The jet pilots always lose. The UFOs either speed away, executing impossible maneuvers, or simply vanish. The best the pilots have been able to produce is a few feet of grainy film showing blurry lights four or five miles away.

The ADC is becomingly increasingly aware they are not able to defend our skies.

The colonel presses Ruppelt. Why, he wants to know, does Blue Book always assume the sighting is anything but a UFO? Why not investigate from the standpoint we are being invaded? He reasons this approach would produce more evidence of what UFOs really are.

No one at ADC has a clue about the truth of Roswell, the projectors, the downed saucers, or even the UFO reports that Blue Book is instructed to keep top secret within the group. Compartmentalization now has people working at cross purposes.

The briefing deteriorated into a lively discussion of what should be done and how things should be investigated.

Numerous airplane pilots have seen strange things in the sky every day since the radar sightings on 19 July. The problem is growing, and the Air Force is trying to determine what, if anything, to tell the public.

The few in the know, the illuminati of Roswell, conducted numerous, nervous meetings. All existing projectors were ordered to military bases around Washington, and pressure to link the projector to radar-controlled firing was redoubled. But it was all too little, too late. At 10:30 PM, 26 July, all hell broke loose.

Below is a transcript of an article that appeared in the

Washington Post on 29 July, 1952. Most of what is known to the public about these events is included. The scary part, the part that would panic Americans, is to this day the government's most-guarded secret.

Seen by Radar and Eyes

'Saucer' Outran Jet, Pilot Says Air Force Puts Lid on Inquiry

By Paul Sampson Fort, Reporter

Military secrecy veils an investigation of the mysterious, glowing, aerial objects that showed up on radar screens in the Washington area Saturday night for the second consecutive week.

A jet pilot sent up by the Air Defense Command to investigate the latter objects reported he was unable to overtake glowing lights moving near Andrews Air Base.

Air Force spokesmen said yesterday they could report only that an investigation was being made into the sighting of the objects on the radar screen in the CAA Air Route Traffic Control Center at Washington National Airport, and on two other radar screens. Methods of the investigation were classified as secret, a spokesman said.

The same source reported an expert from the Air Technical Intelligence Center at Wright-Patterson Air Force base, Dayton, Ohio, was here last week investigating the objects sighted July 19. It may be more than a month before this inquiry is evaluated and the information released, it was said.

The expert has been identified as Capt. E. J. Ruppelt. Reached by telephone at his home in Dayton yesterday, Ruppelt said he could make no comment on his activity in Washington.

Capt. Ruppelt confirmed that he was in Washington last week, but said he had not come here to investigate the mysterious objects. He recalled he did make an investigation after hearing of

the objects, but could not say what he investigated. The captain said he had been informed of the latest sightings of the lights.

Another Air Force spokesman said here yesterday the Air Force is taking all steps necessary to evaluate the sightings.

"The intelligence people," this spokesman explained, "sent someone over to the control center at the time of the sightings, and did whatever necessary to make the proper evaluation."

Asked whether the radar equipment might have malfunctioned, the spokesman said radar, like the compass, is not a perfect instrument and is subject to error. He thought, however, the investigation would be made by persons acquainted with the problems of radar in the area that picked up the objects. An employee of the National Airport control tower said the radar scope there picked up very weak "blips" of the objects. The tower radar, however, is for short ranges and is not as powerful as that at the center. Radar at Andrews Air Force Base also registered the objects from about 8:30 PM until midnight. Andrews' radar located them about seven miles south of the base.

On Screen till 3 AM

The objects, "flying saucers" or what have you, appeared on the radar scope at the airport center at 9:08 PM. Varying from four to 12 in number, the objects were seen on the screen until 3 AM, when they disappeared.

At 11:25 PM, two F-94 jet fighters from the Air Defense Command squadron at Newcastle, Del., capable of attaining 600-miIe-per-hour speeds, took off to investigate the objects.

Airline, civil and military pilots described the objects as looking like the lighted end of a cigarette or a cluster of orange and red lights.

One jet pilot observed four lights in the vicinity of Andrews Air

Force Base, but was not able to overtake them, and they disappeared in about two minutes.

The same pilot observed a steady white light 10 miles east of Mount Vernon at 11:49 PM. The light, about five miles from him, faded in a minute. The lights also were observed in the Beltsville, Md., vicinity. At 1:40 AM, two other F-94 jet fighters took off and scanned the area until 2:20 AM but did not make any sighting.

Visible in Two Ways

Although unidentified objects have been picked up on radar before, the incidents of the last two Saturdays are believed to be the first time they have been spotted on radar—while visible to the human eye.

Besides the pilots who last Saturday saw the lights, a woman living on Mississippi Ave. told The Post she saw a "very bright light" streaking across the sky toward Andrews Base about 11:45 PM. Then a second object, with a tail like a comet, whizzed by, and a few seconds later, a third passed in a different direction toward Suitland, she said.

Radar operators plotted the speed of Saturday night's "visitors" at from 38 to 90 miles an hour, but one jet pilot reported faster speeds for the light he saw.

The jet pilot reported he had no apparent "closing speed" when he attempted to reach the lights he saw near Andrews. This means the lights were moving at least as fast as his top speed—a maximum of 600 miles per hour.

One person who saw the lights when they first appeared in this area did not see them last night. He is E. W. Chambers, an engineer at Radio Station WRC, who spotted the lights while working early the morning of July 20 at the station's Hyattsville tower.

Chambers said he was sorry he had seen the lights because he

had been skeptical about "flying saucers" before. Now, he said, he sort of "wonders" and worries about the whole thing.

Leon Davidson, 804 South Irving St., Arlington, a chemical engineer who has made an exhaustive study of flying saucers as a hobby, said yesterday reports of saucers in the East have been relatively rare.

Davidson has studied the official Air Force report on the saucers, including some of the secret portions never made public, and analyzed all the data in the report.

Davidson, whose study of saucers is impressively detailed and scientific, said he believes the lights are American "aviation products"—probably circular flying wings, using new-type jet engines that permit rapid acceleration and relatively low speeds. He believes they are either new fighters, guided missiles or piloted guided missiles.

He cited some of the recent jet fighters, including the Navy's new F-4D which has a radical bat wing, as examples of what he thinks the objects might resemble.

Davidson thinks the fact that the lights have been seen in this area indicates the authorities may be ready to disclose the new aircraft in the near future. Previously, most of the ‘verified’ saucers were seen over sparsely inhabited areas, Davidson explained, and now, when they appear here, it may indicate that secrecy is not so important any more.

END ARTICLE WASHINGTON POST 29 JULY 1952

CHAPTER SEVEN

The article in the Washington Post provides a fairly accurate account of the known events of that night.

The military was not entirely forthcoming about the events of that night. The sin of omission is such a small one, especially if it is for our own good. Here's the rest of the story. Mea culpa.

At 1:00 AM, 27 July, 1952, UHF radios in F-94s flying over Washington, DC and at Andrews Air Force base began receiving messages of unknown origins. The messages were in code. The message repeated itself every minute until 2:00 AM. When the transmission recording was played back, it sounded like long beeps at various pitches. The tapes were sent to the Armed Forces Security Agency, a short-lived branch of the military with the responsibility of monitoring and decoding foreign transmissions.

General Twining took command of security for the tape. He authorized one copy to be made and kept in the safe in his offices. The original was to be used by AFSA and kept in their safe at all times when not in use. A junior officer from Twining's staff was assigned to be with the tape at all times when it was outside the safe, and round-the-clock guards were posted while the tapes were in the safe at night.

The cryptologists at AFSA went through the usual deciphering steps, including slowing the tape down and playing it backwards, which produced only longer, deeper beeps. Then, on the second day, they decided to play the tape on a special player that allowed them to control the speed to as slow as it would play. It worked.

The message was a series of letters, numbers, and apparently random spaces. But they made no sense. It was a code within a code. The chief cryptologist wrote the code on a blackboard and

called a brainstorming session. An hour later, a teletype operator came in to request a signoff on the receipt of a high-priority intercept. He waited at the back of the room until there was a break in the conversation. Then he softly stated what was obvious to him: “That message is for SIGABA.”

The room fell deadly silent.

SIGABA was a mechanical ciphering machine developed by the US in World War II. In addition to operating like a teletype machine, it employed five discs that randomized characters when typed in or printed out on the paper tape. In order for this to work, every machine had to have each of the five discs individually set to a specific starting point. This starting point was changed every day.

Once it sank in, the math-genius cryptologists followed the sergeant to his machine and handed him a sheet of paper with the code.

The young man was no dummy. He flipped his calendar back to 27 July, reset his machine for that date, and typed. The tape printed out a series of numbers and regular spaces. The captain from Twining’s staff picked up a phone and called his boss.

Twining arrived in the nick of time. The mathematically minded cryptologists had not yet figured out what the message meant, but they would have in another half hour. General Twining gathered everyone into the conference room. He walked to the blackboard and erased the original code.

He addressed the audience in a soft but threatening voice. “You are to erase this from your minds. You are to give Captain Dolan your notepads, all copies of anything to do with this project, the original tape, and the teletype printout. What you have done here is to never leave this room. This is a matter of the highest national security. Do you understand?”

The crowd answered to the affirmative with nods and whispers. The materials were gathered quickly, and Twining and his staff departed.

General Twining returned to his offices, handwrote a report, then carried it to Truman.

The president's schedule is almost always full. To show up at the White House without an appointment is a waste of time—unless you are bringing vital and urgent information. Even then, the president has to juggle meetings to work the messenger in without upsetting foreign dignitaries, Congressional leaders, or whoever happened to be in the Oval Office at the time.

Fortunately for Twining, Truman was not at the White House; he was in his temporary home across the street, The Blair House. The White House was undergoing major reconstruction. A piano leg had punched through the ceiling some months earlier, and it was decided the White House needed fixing up a bit.

Harry and Bess Truman had elected to move into the Blair House, normally a multiunit residence used for visiting dignitaries. President Truman had claimed one of the upstairs rooms as his office, and would see most of his familiar visitors there.

An eager Truman kept Twining waiting less than thirty minutes. Twining handed Truman his one-page summary as they sat on a sofa.

The president read the heading: Coded Transmission from Flying Saucer Near Washington, 1 AM, 27 July 1952.

"What do the numbers mean, Nate?" Truman asked, studying the paper with a down-turned mouth.

"They are coordinates, Mr. President," Twining replied, pointing to the first and last set of numbers. "See, sir, the sequence begins and ends with the same set. The entire transmission was this

message repeated every minute."

"What does it mean?" Truman knew Twining would never have barged in if it weren't of the utmost importance.

"For one, our code is breached. This was broadcast with the correct code settings for the day and intended for our decoding machine." Twining was flushing. The AFSA reported to the JCS, and he shared responsibility for the failure.

Truman sighed heavily. During the Cold War, Soviet agents were thought to be everywhere, monitoring everything we did. If the Soviets cracked the code, it could be disastrous. But then Truman realized the Soviets would never let us know they knew.

"The second thing is what the coordinates represent. The first and last one is the exact crash site for Roswell. The others are for every UFO we have shot down." Twining let his words hang in the air.

Truman looked him in the eye. "Hell," he said. "They caught us with our hand in their cookie jar. Okay, they know a hell of a lot more about us then we do them." Truman paused, looking at the coordinates written on the paper in his hand. "What's your best guess?" he asked Twining.

"They have a defense against the projector, which means they probably have offensive capabilities but haven't yet used them." Twining paused. His family had fought in every war in American history. His name, Nathan Farragut Twining, carried the military banner of his forefathers. He weighed what would be expected of him based on his answer to Truman's question then continued. "They haven't started shooting, so they must want to talk."

Truman looked over his wire-rimmed glasses, studying Twining as if making up his mind. "Okay, let's do it. Figure out how to communicate to them that we want to talk. Get back to me

tomorrow."

The president walked Twining to the door. "I think I would feel better if they had shot back. Wanting to talk to us is, in a way," Truman paused, "more frightening. It's like we are the Indians meeting the Dutch on Manhattan Island. No matter what we do, we are going to get the short end of their stick."

Truman closed the door and went back to his desk. He wrote a note for his secretary to arrange a lunch meeting for tomorrow in his study.

Twining slid into the backseat and his driver closed the door of his black Lincoln Town Car. He had decided to broadcast his message in the same code they had used to wake us up. He hoped that would be enough. He had commanded strategic bombers that took the war to the enemy's heartland with unemotional, high-altitude precision. Diplomacy, with humans or aliens, was not to his liking. He was concerned about having a viable backup plan. He should not have worried.

A clock, a gift from Josephine Bonaparte to President Madison and his wife Dolley, sat on the mantle in Truman's study. The beautiful, gold casing originated in Paris; the workings were German. The clock survived the burning of the White House in the War of 1812 because Dolley thought Josephine a French tart in empress's clothing and had the clock stored in a warehouse with other gifts from foreign dignitaries.

Dolley's clock sat on the mantle in the Truman Study in the Blair House the night Harry Truman from Missouri, the Show Me State, had his first close encounter of the fourth kind. The German part of the clock chimed the half hour before midnight.

Truman usually turned in around 10:00 and rose before 5:00 AM. That night he was too anxious to sleep; he was busy worrying

about his coming meeting with Twining and the rest of the Roswell illuminati. The clock's soft chime did not break his concentration on the reports he read at his desk.

The nausea did. A miserable wave rolled through him. Vomit rose. He felt cold, sweaty, clammy, pale, and flushed all at once. His vision blurred. There was ungodly ringing in his ears. Vertigo made the room spin sickeningly. He tried to stand but nothing worked. He slumped, helpless in his chair. He felt he was asleep, but he was not.

The nausea subsided a bit and Truman opened his eyes. His chin rested on his chest so that his head cocked to the right. He had to roll his eyes up to see across his desk. There sat three men. Truman tried to focus. What he thought he saw were small men, wearing trench coats buttoned at the neck and fedora hats pulled down in the front in the fashion of Roaring Twenties gangsters. Their faces were obscured by shadows, but he thought they wore glasses.

They spoke directly to his mind, without sound, or the movement of lips. In the midst of this crisis, Truman thought of James Forrestal. "Oh God! Jim, Jim, what have I done?"

He did not know how long he sat, paralyzed, listening to the little men's odd accent. Hadn't Jim Forrestal mentioned the peculiar accents of the men following him? Hadn't Forrestal claimed they were small, 'foreign'-looking men? He and the rest of the team believed Forrestal to be going insane. Forrestal did crack, but now Truman knew why, and he understood why Forrestal fought tooth and nail to stop all the post-Roswell activities. He sat for what seemed a very long time. He did not remember speaking with them, only listening, but surely he must have; they seemed to answer his questions.

Another wave of nausea, a blinding bolt of a headache and, as he blacked out, he vividly remembered the problems of James Forrestal.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Before I left for Mexico three years ago, I—with the help of a friend—made preparations for life on the run from the US government.

Robert Cleburne is the genius who helped make my life on the lam possible. We met fairly early in our careers as civil servants.

In the 1970s, Bob and I were programmers for the CIA. This was before the supercomputers; we started on Univac 1050-IIIs and dutifully typed our cobalt code into teletype-like machines that created punch cards that filled the trays that were fed into the computer in order for it to function. In those days, the computers we worked with were in a basement at Langley Field. The two computers took up most of a twenty-by-forty-foot room. The room was sealed and vented to make it dust free, and the temperature was never more than one degree off the ideal temperature of sixty-six degrees.

Bob and I became good friends. Working with him made me an exceptional programmer for those times, but I never could hold a candle to Bob. He seemed to channel code from the higher power.

When I transferred to work with NATO intelligence operations in Germany, Bob and I stayed friends and never lost touch.

I had thought of asking Bob to help me vanish right before the black SUVs' headlights but, as good and loyal a friend I knew that he was, it was too risky for him.

Then one evening at a bar in Georgetown he told me was dying. A week later we met for lunch. I told him what I was up to and asked for his help. He not only agreed, he seemed delighted and said it sounded like great fun. I waited until he was dead to

vanish from the US. His burial was about thirty years after he ceased to exist outside of government agencies.

Soon after I went to NATO, Bob was promoted through a progression of jobs until he ended up the head of the most valuable military asset in the US arsenal. Bob ran an unnamed unit of computer experts who worked in a subbasement in the Library of Congress. They thought of themselves as the original geeks.

Their missions ranged from the sublime to the outrageous. They routinely linked into orbiting satellites belonging to foreign powers, downloaded data, then replaced real data with what we wanted the owners of the satellites to believe. They once, on a lark, traced the financial transactions of a US senator who led a charge to unmask the CIA and make public all black operations. By the time the senator was to raise the issue in congress, the FBI, Treasury Department, and the senator himself received untraceable letters detailing deposits and transfers in foreign banks under various names and numbers implicating the senator in tax fraud, not to mention possible campaign contributions from shell companies linked to South American drug cartels. The note at the bottom of the e-mail the senator received simply read, “Have a Nice Day. The CIA.”

I tell you this only so you can appreciate the genius of Bob and his digital warriors who protected the US and disrupted foreign and terrorist plots and threats. Their crowning glory was the nuclear facility in Iran.

Back in 2008, the world looked on, impotent to prevent Iran from producing the ingredients for atomic weapons. While much political hyperbole and threats of possible sanctions were fed to the media, short of invading Iran, nothing stopped them from going their merry way toward making The Bomb: nothing in their way at all except for Bob Cleburne and a few computer nerds.

Tantalizing hints began drifting to intelligence agencies around the world in 2009. By mid 2010 it was clear: something was afoul at Natanz, Iran's super-secret, weapons-grade-uranium factory. Their plutonium production output was paltry. The factory, which cost hundred of billions of dollars, was not working the way it should, and no one knew why. For months the engineers scratched their heads, trying everything imaginable to return to schedule, but nothing worked. A few months later a Belarusian company working with Iran discovered a virus in the system. It turned out to be the most intelligent, lethal virus ever created, and its only target was the equipment at Natanz.

Places like Natanz are secret. They have security both physical and digital to keep viruses out. The facility at Natanz was more secret than most because it was not connected to the Internet. No way could a computer virus infect its computers.

This inconvenience was not a problem for Bob. His guys simply infected more than 100,000 computers that were on the Internet and within fifty miles of Natanz. The virus, called Stuxnet, simply waited quietly, attaching itself to every e-mail, every website, every piece of circuitry connected to these computers. At least one USB memory stick was inserted into one of the 100,000 infected computers and then plugged into a computer at Natanz. In programmer parlance, 'that was all she wrote.'

Over the next few days Stuxnet infected every circuit board in the factory and began looking for its targets. Using digital certificates of authorization stolen from JMicron and Realtek, it convinced the Natanz computer operating system (made by Siemens in Germany) that it was a resident program. Once connected to all relevant systems, Stuxnet went to work. It attacked the frequency converters (manufactured by a Finnish company, Vacon and an Iranian company, Fararo Paya) that ran the

centrifuges.

Stuxnet would order the centrifuges to speed up at inappropriate times and then slow them down too quickly. This erratic behavior damaged the converters, the centrifuges, and the bearings, and it corrupted the uranium in the tubes. At the same time, Stuxnet masked its antics from the plant operating and security systems.

By the time the virus was discovered in June of 2010, it had spread to Bushehr, Iran's nuclear-power plant construction. Upon being discovered, Stuxnet destroyed itself before it could be traced back to any source.

In order to have pulled this off, Bob's geeks needed to understand the details of the operating system from Siemens and the frequency converters from Vacon and Fararo Paya. This order grows taller. Fararo Paya is an Iranian factory so secret that the Iranian Atomic Energy Commission did not even know it existed.

The fact remains, Iran is several years behind on their nuclear bomb, and it is being debated whether Iran should scrap the Bushehr power plant and start from scratch, as it has been determined that Stuxnet has the ability to take control and shut down the entire power grid. The idea that Stuxnet may be idling quietly on every PC in Iran makes them more than a little nervous.

As a sidenote, you may see a satellite photo of Iran's nuclear facility. You will notice it is aligned in the shape of chevrons pointing toward the southwest. Look behind the second one and you see a large area of desert. Look more closely and you can see that it too roughly forms a third chevron aligned with the others. That's the bulk and heart of the nuclear production plant beneath about two hundred feet of earth.

Bob and his boys can do about anything using

compartmentalization and an army of unwitting programmers who produce innocuous lines of code that have no clear purpose.

So, what did Bob do for me? He made some websites that house applications allowing me to tap into various computer systems in such a way security does not report an intruder or off-site link. The apps have a password decoder to deal with sites that routinely change passwords. This can be a little tedious. Sometimes it takes the app 15 or 20 seconds to dial in. Another handy feature my websites have is a search engine that allows me to type in individuals' or department names and it brings up their computers and databases. In short, with any computer hooked to the Internet I can log into one of my websites and gather recent information about the hunt for me. It has saved my butt more than once.

They will figure it out eventually, but when one of my sites is compromised, it creates a mirror website then destroys itself. I understand how it works and know enough about programing and the Internet to keep it current, but I would have never been able to create it. Thank Bob's genius.

Bob also set me up with a program he created for himself. It is really cool. Say I want the phone number or address for someone famous who doesn't want cyberstalkers. I type in the person's full name, approximate age, and as much of an address as I have. For example, if I wanted to find Bill Gates, I would type in his name, age 55-65, and Washington, USA, Microsoft and hit send. I go about my business, when the program's cyber scouts find something they report back, and next time I log in to the website there might be four or five Bill Gates that fit the description. There's a fair amount of information for each that the little snooping bots find at utility, cell phone, and insurance companies, and banks. It also compromises hospitals, schools, DMV, law

enforcement, and almost all government agencies, but lately it is not as likely to break through firewalls. Like I said, Bob was a genius way ahead of his time.

Bob's gifts had a negative side effect; I had too much confidence in them and became complacent. I allowed myself to relax and enjoy my exile. I decided to see Europe a little bit at a time, and was in Germany the first time the SUVs almost caught up to me.

I took the #28 inner-city express from Bamberg and changed trains in Nuremberg. I was not a full train ahead of the SUV with German plates. I stayed too long in Bamberg.

Bamberg is a quiet, small town in Bavaria about forty miles north of Nuremberg. It survived World War II because the Nazis had an artillery factory nearby and ringed the place with anti-aircraft guns to keep away allied bombers. Bamberg survived and maintains its old-world, Bavarian charm.

It is home to several breweries, some of which have been making beer continuously for 800 years. They have had time to get it right. It has charming inns, pubs, and biergartens. All in all, it is a beautiful, tranquil place, and it sucked me in to its relaxed way of life.

I travelled there using an Icelandic passport under the name of Fjalar Jonsson, a retired, freelance travel writer for Scandinavian airlines and cruise ships. I chose to be from Iceland for two reasons. Almost no one speaks Icelandic outside of its boundaries, and the system for naming children makes it difficult to trace people. For example, Fjalar Jonsson's father's name was Jon Stefansson. So the son's last name is derived from the father's first name. It makes almost no sense to most Westerners, but it is similar to the way people receive their names in Ethiopia and

Mongolia. If I weren't a blue-eyed, baldheaded, old, white man, I would use identities from these countries as well because their languages and abilities to track citizens is somewhat lacking by today's standards.

There was a biergarten in Bamberg a short walk from the Heinz Weyermann Brewery. Old men gathered daily to sit in squeaking, wood chairs and play cards on well-used, century-old tables. Hearts was the game of choice. Once I was invited to sit in on a game, I began showing up several times a week, as I am quite good at the game and someone always wanted me on their team.

Bamberg's spell of tranquility had me there nearly six weeks when I realized my Hearts partner, Gunther, might be trouble. Gunther was a great player. We usually mopped the floor with the opposition when we were partners, and when we weren't we gave each other a challenge.

Gunther spoke little, and when he did it was always about the game or something going on in Bamberg. Never did he mention family, friends, or pets. I should have known.

One of the other players told me that Gunther was a retired government worker. He had worked for the BND, the Bundesnachrichtendienst, or Federal German Intelligence Service. He also said Gunther had lately shown more interest in me than almost anything in ten years.

That was all I needed to break the local spell. I paid cash for my room for another week and told the landlord I would be driving to surrounding towns and not back in Bamberg for two or three days.

The next morning, when I left Bamberg, I was a blue-eyed, bald-headed, old man. Once in Nuremberg, the city famous for the Nazi War Tribunals, I shipped my largest suitcases at a Federal

Express office to the Holiday Inn in Lisbon, Portugal to be held for a mister Aubrey Sproul. After returning Fjalar Jonsson's rented VW, I bought a ticket to Paris. Audrey Sproul spent two days in Paris, then took the Elipsos train to Madrid and changed for Lisbon.

Sometimes, things seem coincidental. They almost never are, but they seem like it. The Lusitania night train to Lisbon is a rolling hotel. If you want to spend the money, a grande suite offers a private shower and bath. I have a difficult time sleeping on trains, and booked a private room so as not to disturb other travelers in a shared compartment. When we pulled out of Madrid, I found a book wedged between seat and wall. It was a copy of The Cold War: A Global History with Documents, by Edward H. Judge and John W. Langdon. It contained, among other things, excerpts from James Forrestal's diaries.

I had read the diaries years before they had been gutted and sections replaced with forgeries.

Forrestal's political undoing had been his stance on Israel. He was fine with the 1947 treaty that made it an independent state. He was fine with the awkward truth. Its creation took land from neighboring Middle East countries that previously owned the land before the Western powers waved their magic map-wand and poof, a new country appeared between them.

Forrestal felt that the financially strapped United States, faced with shrinking and dismantling its military in the face of Soviet imperialism, should not foot the bill for Israel's new arms race with its neighbors. Forrestal made the mistake of saying as much, on more than one occasion.

He was not anti-Semitic in the least. He was simply against spending money we did not have to support a newly formed

foreign nation. Had that nation been African, Islamic, or Latin, any political backlash would have been easily weathered.

Because it was Israel, a land created for its historic occupants, a people who had suffered the most horrific genocide the world has ever known, the backlash erupted into a volcano that blew in the doors of Congress and filled newspapers with misquotes and exaggerations.

He became a target of pro-Israeli Zionist Jewish political groups and campaign contributors. Secretary of Defense would be the final legacy of a long career.

As time passed it became clear Forrestal was not well. He wasn't sleeping, and occasionally seemed to lose his composure and reveal fits of paranoia. Rumors were he believed he was being followed by 'foreign men wearing gray topcoats, hats, and sunglasses' and that these 'dark, little men' were Israeli secret service sent to intimidate him. When he entered a room, he would move from window to window, looking out while he spoke. At night he changed from a person who loved the fresh air of open windows to a suspicious, anxious man who triple-checked to make sure windows were locked.

His contemporaries felt sorry for him as his physical and mental deterioration manifested. 'The job was too much for any man,' they said. Forrestal had lost weight, looked terrible and no longer seemed capable of being an effective Secretary of Defense. Truman asked for his resignation. Forrestal agreed and shortly thereafter was admitted to Bethesda Naval Hospital at the behest of Truman, Twining, and other worried peers.

That's the official story. Now hear this.

Forrestal never thought he was being followed by Zionist or Israeli agents. The expunged portions of his diaries made that

perfectly clear. He did believe he was being followed by ‘little, gray men with large, black eyes and hats to disguise large, hairless heads.’ In his diaries he called the aliens ‘them’ or the ‘windowmen.’ One of the first diary entries to be replaced after his death was about his first encounter with them.

One night while reading in his home study he became nauseated and suffered a short period of paralysis. He felt like his brain was burning and swelling. The pressure nearly made him black out.

But Forrestal was a tough man who hated to be out of control. He was much tougher than General Twining or even President Truman. He did not black out. Instead he struggled to regain control. He focused on moving the index finger on his right hand; when he thought he felt it move, he focused on the middle finger next to it. By the time he was able to flex all the fingers on his right hand, the burning in his brain subsided as he continued to struggle against the paralysis.

Most men who suddenly lost body control, whose head dropped forward as their arms collapsed at their sides, would be terrified. Forrestal was more surprised than frightened. He thought perhaps he was having a stroke or heart attack or both. His surprise came from knowing he was healthy, and a medical calamity was the last thing he expected. He needed to regain control so he could find some help and go to a hospital.

Forrestal only became terrified after he regained control of his neck and lifted his head.

Three creatures stood before him. He knew what they were; he had seen their dead brethren in New Mexico. Forrestal’s original diaries may have contained the first recorded description of what today are known as ‘grays.’ As he gazed at them and them at him

with their unblinking eyes, he felt the paralysis returning. His head began to drop and, with the sheer force of the remarkable will that was in Forrestal's arsenal of human attributes, he forced the paralysis away.

The three visitors' expressions did not change, but something about their posture seemed to shrink away. As one, they moved toward an open window opposite the chair in which Forrestal sat.

Forrestal watched as they, one by one, climbed up to the second-floor window ledge and stepped into the night.

The nausea subsided and within a few minutes Forrestal's body, other than his heart rate, was back to normal. He slowly stood, checking his balance and muscle control. He walked to the window, looked into the darkness, then closed and locked it. Suddenly he was exhausted. While his mind raced with a million questions, and his heart had still not slowed to normal, he was physically drained, as if he had boxed fifteen rounds in the ring.

He forced himself to make some notes and even sketch the face and head of one of the visitors.

Even with his amazed mind racing, he fell asleep quickly and began to dream.

In the dream, the three visitors floated outside his window. Smaller then when he saw them, they were somehow more menacing. They were talking to him, all three at once, filling his head but incomprehensible. Then his dream mind began to separate the voices, and he understood individual phrases, but he could not tell from which they came.

He understood the word peace, and immediately doubled over and vomited on the window seat. When he heard something about commerce, he became so afraid he pissed his dream pants. And when their faces suddenly twisted into grotesque smiles and they

spoke of helping humanity, he had never so strongly wanted to physically destroy any living thing as he did those three little horrors.

The dreamed ended and he woke, his mouth tasting of bile. He got up to go to the bathroom and as his bladder emptied his heart filled with overwhelming desire to find and kill his visitors. He flushed the toilet, looked up, and quickly closed the bathroom window.

That morning his body kept the day's schedule, but he could not concentrate; his mind replayed the visit and the vivid dream. After his last appointment he made the first visitor-related entry into his diary. The page and a half he wrote was eventually replaced with a restatement of his thoughts about letting Israel sink or swim on its own and focus America's resources on the Red Menace of the Soviet Union.

Forrestal encountered the visitors again the next night, and the night after that, and every night. It didn't take long before it was difficult for him to tell whether a particular visit was real, a hallucination, or a dream. At some point he stopped trying to differentiate. It didn't really matter. They were in his head, and he knew who they were and what they wanted.

Sometimes, as he watched them float outside a window, he could see they no longer attempted disguise. The hats that helped hide the size of their heads were gone. Their large, black eyes no longer appeared as sunglasses. Instead, black pools—sometimes reflective like polished, black stone, at others times opaque—became windows into a black void.

At first he understood they wanted to communicate directly with his mind, but he quickly realized their communication contained subtle, manipulative elements geared to make him agree

with what they wanted. Forrestal found the episodes repugnant and frightening. He focused his considerable will and determination on resisting the visitors.

He knew who they were, of course, and what they wanted. They were the aliens who had invaded America's skies. We had shot down some of their ships and now they wanted a treaty. Then things became much worse for Forrestal.

Forrestal was always frightened and uncomfortable with the occurrences. He never saw them unless he was alone or asleep, and it made it difficult for him to discuss even obliquely with his staff. The change involved two major elements. They were no longer trying to communicate, they were trying to control his mind; and he began to see them in daylight when he was around others, but back in their disguises, trench coats with turned-up collars and hats pulled low in front.

Entering a car headed to a meeting he might see three of them watching from a distance as the car pulled away. Exiting the car he might see three more a block away standing on the sidewalk as if in conversation.

Several times he tried to bring the aliens' presence to the attention of someone with him. He would say something like, "Do we know those fellows?" Most of the time the person or people with him saw nothing unusual, and often the aliens were gone when Forrestal looked back. Sometimes the person with Forrestal would see the trench-coated group walking away or entering a building, but have no clue what is was about them that prompted Forrestal to call attention.

After several weeks, the effects of sleepless nights, fatigue, and fear visibly manifested, and people close to Forrestal noticed a change in his behavior. He began losing weight, and his face took

on a dark, hollow appearance. People who had been with him during the 'look at those guys over there' episodes compared notes, and it wasn't long before the Washington rumor mill cranked up and Forrestal's behavior and physical appearance collided with whispers he was emotionally spent and that he thought Israeli and Soviet agents followed him day and night.

Forrestal decided it was time to share his misadventures, and called one of only two people he could talk to: General Nate Twining. They met at Forrestal's office.

Twining knew the rumors. He opposed Forrestal's policy with Israel. He also understood the Jewish people were just coming from the holocaust and Israel was in a Nazi-hunting, lynch-party mood. They felt if you were not for them—the symbol of them being Israel—you were against them. The newly formed government of Israel had no intention of allowing anything like concentration camps (whether in Germany, Russia, or Arab nations) to open again. Their spy network grew exponentially, and Twining had no doubt that because of Forrestal's position limiting aid to Israel that he was probably under some sort of surveillance. So Twining entered Forrestal's office knowing that the Secretary of Defense had some basis for his paranoia. Even so, he respected Forrestal as one of the toughest men he ever met, and was surprised it was a topic for discussion, and especially curious why Forrestal asked him as he had little to do with America's position on foreign aid.

He was shown into Forrestal's office almost too quickly. Forrestal was standing by a window, the drapes drawn. He looked gaunt, thin. Sleepless hollows around his eyes created a desperate, frightened appearance. Twining knew whatever this was about it was serious, and calling the meeting had robbed Forrestal of his strong pride.

“Nate, they are after me,” Forrestal said, dispensing with pleasantries.

Twining finished crossing the room and extended his hand to shake. Forrestal took it automatically and said, “I know it sounds insane, but they want something from me and I am not sure how long I can keep them out of my mind.”

“What in the hell are you talking about, James?” Twining asked, searching Forrestal’s face.

“The aliens from the flying saucers,” Forrestal spat out, a ‘for better or worse’ look of relief flooding his body. “You know I saw the bodies in Alamogordo. I don’t know why or how, but I believe that is why they want me, because I saw their dead.”

Twining said, “Why don’t we sit down and you tell me everything.” His voice was unusually soft, even warm, and his mind was racing at the implications. Even if only a fabrication of Forrestal’s imagination, the consequences of what Forrestal knew being leaked would be catastrophic.

Forrestal told him everything. It poured out of him. As relief and color came to him, he told Twining about the first meeting and paralysis, the windows, them following him. He told the general how at first they tried to communicate with him, and he felt them attempting to mine information from his mind, and he fought to close his mind to their probing. He told Twining how, soon after, it became worse. They stopped trying to communicate and were constantly trying to invade his mind. Forrestal felt like they were studying him, practicing, developing techniques to break past the barriers he erected against them.

“Who knows about this, James?” Twining asked, keeping his soothing tone.

Forrestal looked at Twining as if he were the one with mental

issues. “I’m not crazy, Nate. You and I are the only two. I wanted to talk to you before telling the president. I don’t know what might happen to me, as they seem to come and go as they please, and I need to warn everyone involved with this thing.”

“Thank you. I know this is tough for you, but you did the right thing. How can I help?” The general’s faced was filled with concern—for a number of reasons.

Somewhere in the conversation, Forrestal’s ramrod posture had returned and now he sat looking into Twining’s eyes. “I think the two of us should meet with Truman, tell him what is happening to me, and find out if anyone else is having,” he paused, then finished, “experiences.”

Twining agreed. Forrestal made a phone call and was able to obtain a meeting with Truman the next afternoon. They said their good-byes. Twining left with worried thoughts, and Forrestal hoped that somehow sharing his horror would provide relief from his visitors. In a way, it did.

After the meeting with Truman, Forrestal agreed to have a full physical (Truman intentionally avoided any hint of psychologists). Truman expressed serious concern for Forrestal’s physical condition.

A week later they met again, and with the candor for which he was famous, Truman told Forrestal it was time for him to resign his post as Secretary of Defense. His politics had kicked up a hornets’ nest, making it difficult for Forrestal to fulfill his duties, and now Truman felt, in his physical and mental state, Forrestal had to step down. Truman insisted the Secretary of Defense continue to have his health monitored. By early March, Forrestal was persuaded to check into Bethesda. Truman told Forrestal that once he regained his vigor, they would meet with all the illuminati

and sort out the aliens' intrusions into Forrestal's mind.

Forrestal's letter of resignation, though given to Truman in February, was not made public until 1949. The rest, as they say, is history. Well, not quite recorded history.

The train pulled into Lisbon and I woke lying on the narrow bed with the book on my chest. Surprised at myself for falling asleep, I felt oddly refreshed and unusually happy to be alive.

I checked into the Holiday Inn, emptied my suitcases, and turned on my computer. After a shower, I went online and transferred $8,500 Euros to Mr. Audrey Sproul's debit card and headed out with little concern for Ex-BND Agent Gunther No-Last-Name in Bamberg. By the time he realized I wasn't coming back, my trail would be cold. Here you go, Gunther, eat the Queen of Spades.

Of course, I was wrong. The BND are pretty badass when it comes to heating up cold trails. In less than two weeks I was forced to flee the Holiday Inn without time to even collect my clothes. I took a bus out of Lisbon. For the next two months I went into deep undercover, risked spending time in Lebanon, then lost myself in Cairo, and finally wound up in Argentina. My stomach was sour the whole time, and I lost more than the weight I had gained drinking German beer.

This experience made me believe it was time to play one of my aces and take the next trick. I began courting a stranger I had discovered in chat rooms. It was time the SUV drivers understood there are consequences if the roadkill survives their bumpers.

CHAPTER NINE

When the gold-plated clock struck midnight, the plainclothes White House policeman—Joseph Downs, who guarded the Blair House's second floor—knocked on the study door. It was not like the president to stay up this late. When no answer came from the room, he quickly opened the door.

Slumped in his chair, chin on his chest, Truman looked either asleep or dead. Downs, who in two months would be wounded foiling an assassination attempt at this house, sprinted across the room and checked the president's neck for a pulse.

Truman stirred, raised his head, startled by the touch. His vision was clear, the nausea was nearly gone, and he was desperately trying to remember something—something strange, terrifying—something worse than the unleashing of the atom bomb.

"Are you…?" was all Downs could say before Truman rose from his chair.

"I'm fine Joe, fine. I just fell asleep at the helm. I'll go get in bed now."

"Yes, Mr. President. Can I get anything for you? You look a little green behind the gills," Downs asked in a concerned voice. He liked Truman. This president seemed like an honest man, not so political as most of the people who passed him in the halls.

"No Joe, really, I'm fine. Just need to get some sleep," Truman said, walking to his bedroom.

"I'll be outside your door if you need me, sir." Downs positioned himself, back to the wall, just outside Truman's bedroom.

Truman robotically changed into pajamas and crawled into bed,

desperately trying to remember the events from the study.

He fell asleep quickly. The dreams began almost immediately. He was with Forrestal discussing a treaty. He could make a deal that would win the Cold War, but at a horrific price. Forrestal wanted nothing to do with it. Truman, who had decided to drop the first atomic bomb, knew about paying a price to save lives. He thrust his face inches from Forrestal's and yelled at him to shut up, and the tough-as-nails first Secretary of State began to cry like a frightened toddler.

Twining stepped out of the shower to answer the phone. The president wanted to see him right away. He had not slept well. He suffered bad dreams that made him think of Forrestal. In fact, he had been thinking about Forrestal since he woke up. This must have been how it started for Forrestal. But if he was going batty, why go the same way Forrestal did? Twining put the dreams and Forrestal out of mind and finished dressing.

When Twining arrived at the Blair House, he was taken immediately to Truman's study. The president stood at a window, straight backed, hands together behind his back. He turned and walked across the room to his desk.

"Have a seat, Nate," Truman offered, seating himself. Truman, the "Buck Stops Here" President, was not one to beat around the bush, yet today he seemed hesitant. Finally, after an uncomfortable twenty seconds of Truman gazing at Twining, he asked, "What do you know about DNA, Nate?"

CHAPTER TEN

Truman and Twining met for forty minutes. Truman remained hesitant about some of the details of the previous night's encounter and ensuing dreams. Practical as he was, Truman believed the trench-coated men in the study had not been a dream. He did not know how they had come and gone, but the experience had been real. Twining perked up when Truman mentioned Forrestal, and in the last ten minutes they shared what they could remember of their experiences and dreams.

Truman, as do all US presidents, enjoyed 'off the record' lunches. These are essentially meetings that are logged into the Presidential calendar simply as LUNCH. On Friday, 8 August, 1952, Truman, Twining, Robert Lovett, the Secretary of Defense, and Averill Harriman shared a lunch of barbeque sandwiches, baked beans, and potato salad. Though as good as the best barbeque in St. Louis, no one ate much. They talked about everything, beginning at Roswell, and leading to this moment. Then, Truman speaking first, they moved from person to person, revealing dreams and visitations. After all spoke, Truman revealed the final pieces of his encounter: he was to meet with the owners of the UFOs to negotiate a peace and commerce treaty. He handed Harriman a piece of notepaper with longitude and latitude coordinates, and said, "Find out the nearest base with an airstrip and arrange a car. You and I are attending a very important summit."

The lunch ended a little after 3:00 PM, and Truman tried to clear his mind for a 3:30 meeting with Perle Mesta, American Minister to Luxembourg. He couldn't remember why Mesta was insistent on meeting, something to do with easing restrictions on

importing tulip seeds or something equally important.

Truman left the Blair House after 5:00 PM in the passenger seat of a white 1945 Super Deluxe Tudor sedan given to Truman by Henry Ford on 3 July, 1945 as the first post World War II car to roll off US assembly lines. While not up to the standards of the presidential limo, it was of the same body style as the 1942 Fords and blended well in traffic.

At Andrews Air Base, Truman boarded a C-118 Liftmaster—the same type of plane as the Independence, the current presidential aircraft. Harriman was already aboard, and the plane took off for a destination known only to the people aboard.

The pilot, Colonel Frank Williams, stood in the doorway to welcome Truman. Colonel Williams was President Truman's pilot. It did not matter to him if he flew the lush Independence or not. His job was to take Truman where he wanted to go, safe, on time, and keep his mouth shut. If he ever wanted a story to tell, the flight back from Truman's meeting with MacArthur on Wake Island in 1950 provided every ingredient of a best seller. Truman rode copilot for six hours. Furious, the president vented about that 'arrogant asshole.' Frank never said a word.

Harriman already told Frank the flight plan was to be cleansed, that this flight never officially happened. Fine with Frank.

The particular Douglas C-118 was a model R6D-1Z, converted to a staff transport. It was a four-engine plane that maintained a speed of over 300 miles per hour at 20,000 feet for up to 3,000 miles. This one carried extra fuel bladders.

Configured to transport staff, the seats were functionally comfortable—nothing like the comforts on the president's plane—but, like Truman, it would get the job done.

Frank made sure his passengers were secured and turned on the

reading lamps affixed to their seats before vanishing into the cockpit.

The plane was louder than the Independence, and the passengers were offered earplugs. Truman and Harriman read the briefs Harriman brought summarizing the new science of DNA. Thorough as the documents were for their time, the two men about to engage in the most important negotiations of human history would not live long enough to discover how ill-prepared they were to decide the future of the world.

Six hours later the plane landed at an air base in New Mexico where another Ford was waiting.

Harriman drove, Truman rode shotgun. They had their briefcases, a full tank of gas, a road map, and primal feelings about their rendezvous with things not human. Truman closed his eyes, pretending to sleep.

The movie Close Encounters of the Third Kind depicts the first official arranged meeting between aliens and Earthmen. If it was supposed to represent Truman's and Harriman's meeting, it was way too spectacular in that Hollywood way of sights and sounds. In other ways it was not nearly spectacular enough.

While the first meeting between humans and off-worlders may have been in desert terrain, it was most likely nine or ten thousand years ago in Egypt or maybe earlier in Sumeria or possibly even further back in Bharat, now India. Wherever it was, it was not on Devil's Tower framed by dozens of cameras and facilitated by a corps of government scientists and military. Nor was the encounter Truman had in New Mexico in 1952.

Truman's encounter was on a flawless, high-desert July night not far from where it seemed to have all started five years before. They sat in the car, windows down, looking at the star-filled sky.

Among the billions of stars in the sky, Truman thought he saw something and pointed it out to Harriman and Baughman. Things were about to become interesting for the rest of us.

Everything in this book up to this point is verifiable. The next part, the actual meeting between Truman and the aliens, is reconstructed based on evidence that is inadmissible in court: hearsay. A great storyteller would fill the text of the coming encounter with tense dialog, terrifying descriptions, and the excitement that comes when the leader of the Free World meets aliens for the first time. As it is, I will convey only what I believe to be true.

The account, what there is of it, has been pieced together from a story told by Averill's second wife, Marie Norton Whitney Harriman.

Marie Harriman's first husband, Cornelius Vanderbilt Whitney, was a successful businessman who had inherited a tidy sum from his parents, Harry Payne Whitney and Gertrude Vanderbilt. To prove money isn't everything, Marie divorced Cornelius to marry Averill. As the Beatles said, "Money can't buy me love."

In 1970, Marie was a patient in Georgetown hospital. The day before she died of a heart attack, she enjoyed a long visit with her daughter from her first marriage, Nancy Marie Whitney. The conversation began naturally enough about why Marie was in the hospital. She had a chronic case of nerves, which led to diarrhea, which led to dehydration.

Nancy wanted to know what so worried her mother as to make her sick. The answer was not surprising—Averill. Top of the list was Marie's fear she was soon to become Averill's next ex-wife. She saw the signs, Marie said. Maybe the first billboard on her highway of life should have warned her. The billboard that said,

“Hey, he had an affair with you, didn’t he?”

She was also concerned about Averill’s mental health. He had been under a lot of strain the last few years, and she thought he might be cracking. When Nancy said she had not noticed anything unusual about his behavior, Marie’s face flushed and she snapped, “I guess he didn’t tell you about meeting with the Martians,” then told this story.

By 1973, Averill had been dreaming: dreams that weren’t so good. He often woke in the night crying or screaming. Up until a year ago, Averill had been much more active in his government role. As President Johnson’s personal representative in the peace talks with North Vietnam, Averill spent about a third of his time on Flying Tiger Airlines shuttling back and forth. This is not good for someone who is used to multitasking in the big leagues and created time for his mind to wander… and remember. Apparently, his sleeping mind liked to take him down memory lanes heavy in shadows.

Harriman’s night-time terrors went on for weeks, escalating in frequency and severity. At first Marie woke him from the nightmares. When she did, Averill asked if he had said anything, and if so, what?

Marie knew her husband. One of the reasons he was high in the government was his talent for keeping his mouth shut. Everyone trusted him, even his political adversaries. That’s saying a lot in Washington, DC. Marie knew that if Averill thought he was talking in his sleep, he would ban himself to a guest bedroom and make sure the door was locked, so she did what a good wife does. She said no more about Averill’s nightmares, and when he woke himself up in the middle of the night, she feigned sleep. She also listened to everything he said. Some of it terrified her.

At first there was a lot of incomprehensible mumblings about Truman and Forrestal: stuff about little foreign men in big glasses wearing trench coats. He would often wake up crying after these episodes. Then came screams. Finally, nine days before Marie was admitted to the hospital, talking in his sleep, Harriman relived and revealed the meeting that changed the world.

The light Truman pointed out to his companions on the night of 8 July, 1952 grew larger. Within seconds it hovered silently twenty feet off the ground, fifty yards away. It appeared metallic, and areas seemed to be lit from the inside out. It had a translucence about it.

Truman and Harriman exited the car and positioned themselves with their backs to the Ford's grill. The craft made no noise as it moved slowly toward them.

It was a flying disc about 30 feet in diameter. As it came to a stop, a portion of the perimeter hovered over the front of the Ford. It emitted something akin to a mild electrostatic field. The craft slowly descended until it stopped about ten feet above the ground.

The soft glow of the craft's belly went dark. A second later, dozens of bright lights bathed the area below like a surgery table. A hatch slid open near the center of the vehicle's bottom. A second later, something like a small freight elevator descended to six inches above the ground. Three members of the other team were on the lift.

Between four and five feet tall, they wore ill-fitting trench coats belted around their midsection, and fedora hats pulled low. Their feet were clad in gray, felt-like, loose-fitting boots that seemed freakishly wide across the toes. Exposed between the bottoms of their coats and the tops of the boots were frail-looking legs clad in a gray material similar to the boots.

They stepped off the platform and walked to face the Earthmen. They extended their right hands in the classic, modern-day greeting.

Averill wondered if they were the same three who visited his dreams. In other circumstances the humans might have thought the whole thing comic. The three visitors frozen in front of him with their fragile, long-fingered hands extended to shake hands were the opposite of sinister. Their size and dress made it hard to take them seriously. But one glance at the 30-foot flying disc hovering over their heads removed all humor.

The one whose hand Harriman eventually took raised its face to look at him. Its large, black eyes reflected light and made Harriman think they wore some kind of lenses.

As if acting on advice from a travel guide, each alien shook the hand of each Earthman then stepped back. Both men heard the same voice in their heads at once, “Shall we begin?”

The voice repeated the question. It was impossible to tell which of the three spoke. The narrow slits beneath what could have been small, unformed noses never changed from the slightly turned-down curve.

Truman spoke by way of introduction, agenda, and diplomatic well-wishing. He finished by saying he looked forward to reviewing the treaty.

The center alien reached in his coat and extracted an eight-inches-long tube about an inch in diameter. The visitor manipulated the tube so it telescoped outward to triple in length, and then unrolled a screen from inside. The alien again manipulated part of the tube, and the screen glowed with images that swam into clarity.

The thin screen was offered to Truman. The screen, which

seconds before had unrolled from the tube, was rigid and weighed almost nothing.

After a few seconds, the voice inside of Harriman's head announced, "Begin." Harriman assumed Truman heard the voice as well, judging from the president's reaction.

The screen provided a soft, pale, cream-colored background to symbols in a column down the left side of the sheet, and our own Latin-based alphabet on the right. The symbols were similar to Egyptian hieroglyphics, Nordic runes, Ogham, and geometric shapes.

Truman began to read the column in English. As he read, a voice similar to the earlier one announced the words in his head. Harriman heard the voice as he watched, noticing the page on the screen changed to the next page as Truman finished reading the last words on the page before.

After a while, Truman looked at the alien who had handed him the screen and asked, in a normal speaking voice, "Would you like me to take this with me, or should we all wait while I read it?"

The three oversized heads conducted a series of slight, quick nods, and the voice in their heads said, "We will let you know the content."

The alien touched the screen in Truman's hands. The pages flicked on and off the screen. This time, an echoing buzz chased through Harriman's head. He felt the beginning of a terrible headache, then it was over. He looked at the screen. The document had reset to the first page. Truman studied it a few seconds, then offered it to Harriman. Harriman began to read. As he reread the first column, he realized he knew what it said. Not just familiar with what it said, he knew what it said. And not just the first column: he thought about the section dealing with exclusivity and

the correct page appeared on the screen with the exact paragraph positioned where his eyes focused.

After a moment, Truman asked to have a moment with Harriman.

The big heads synchronized the slight bobbing and the voice in their heads said, "Of course." It unnerved Harriman not knowing which of the three spoke. He assumed it was the one who worked the screen.

Truman stopped himself as he turned and said, "No rudeness intended, but will you know what my colleagues and I are saying in private?"

This time a slight, single half-nod and the voice said, "We refrain."

Truman and Harriman sat in the car, closed the doors, and rolled the windows up.

"Did they put the information from the screen into your head?" Truman asked Harriman.

Harriman affirmed that he had thorough knowledge of the treaty, as if he had been working with the document for months.

Truman and Harriman talked. Truman's ideal scenario would be to return to Washington and dictate the treaty then review it with the Roswell illuminati. Truman's biggest concern was if they did not agree to the treaty at this meeting there was the chance they could lose exclusivity.

Truman glossed over the presidential authority to sign treaties. With this treaty, if all parties stood good to their word, no one outside the circle of a very few would ever know.

"Well," Truman said, "if we don't sign now they can make the same deal with the Russians. Whoever signs with them will have

the fifty-year exclusivity. Whoever doesn't do the deal will be up shit creek in a shooting war. We wouldn't push it, but you can bet your ass Stalin will."

Averill said, "Harry. It will end the Cold War. Maybe not next year, but we will always have the upper hand. Besides, I don't want another meeting with these creepy little guys. I say let's do it."

Truman agreed.

They exited the car and again stood in front of the aliens. Truman said that he would agree to the treaty.

The alien handed the screen back to the president. Now the screen swirled and eddied with unformed shapes and colors. The voice in the heads of the humans said, "Please agree."

Truman started to reach for the pen in his pocket—a Waterman pen, the one he used to sign the Yalta Conference agreement—but realized there was no place to sign. Taking a leap of faith, he said, "I, Harry S. Truman, President of the United States of America, agree to the terms and conditions of this treaty henceforth known as The Treaty of Roswell 1952."

An image began taking form, and in a fraction of a second he saw a moving picture of himself accepting the treaty. When he finished speaking, the scene shifted to the three head-bobbers and the voice up until now heard only in their heads emitted from the screen. Each phrase of agreeing to the treaty was first in English then followed by clicking sounds, then English, then clicks, until it ended.

"Thank you," the alien said, reaching for the screen. Within seconds it was rerolled, telescoped, and slipped back into his pocket.

"We will communicate to you as to how and when we will

begin to fill our part of the contract." All three stuck out their hands to shake.

The visitors stepped back on the elevator floor and ascended into the belly of the disc. The hatch closed. The electrostatic field returned. The lights went out returning to the soft glow. The craft slowly drifted upward and back the way it came. One hundred yards out over the road, it accelerated away until it was the size of a dime, then just vanished.

The two humans stood silently until Harriman broke the silence, "It didn't move."

Truman looked at Harriman, wondering if the other's mental state had been damaged by the affair, then said, "Averill, it sure as hell moved. Didn't you see it streak away from us?"

"Yes, I saw it. I was talking about while we were under it. It didn't move, not at all. It was perfectly steady, not like it was floating. How do they do that?" Harriman said, staring at the empty point in the sky where the ship vanished.

Truman laughed.

As they drove back to the airfield the conversation was quiet, reserved like boys waiting to go into the principal's office. At one point Truman said he felt truly humbled and wished he could tell the world. At another, Averill admitted he had never been more frightened in his life, and Truman thought he saw the gleam of a tear in his eye. The more distance they put between them and the site of the meeting, the more comfortable and open they became. By the time they reached the airfield's gates they were giddy as school boys who had been secretly promised things by the real Santa Claus.

Colonel Williams greeted them aboard the Liftmaster, tucked them into their seats, gave each a pillow and blanket, then took

them home. Tired as they were, they could not sleep. The full implications of who they were dealing with sank in. They second-guessed their decision. Fears, real and imagined, danced in their minds, sounding oddly like the echoing voice in the head.

President Truman was late for work on July 9th. All morning meetings rescheduled, the president dictated the treaty from memory to a stenographer from General Twining's staff. Harriman recalled the treaty word-for-word to a second stenographer in another office. It turned out to be shorter work than expected. The stenographers and their shorthand notes were whisked back to the Armed Forces Security Agency's cryptology department and placed in front of typewriters. Each typed version was proofed against its original and corrected. When the two manuscripts were compared, they were for all intents and purposes word-for-word.

The Roswell illuminati gathered at the AFSA the evening of July 10 and were read the treaty. Essentially, the party of the first part, the government of the United States of America, agreed to abide by the terms and conditions herein with the party of the second part, a confederation composed of more than one group of sentient beings: the organization's name translated to English as: Husbands of Commerce Utility. While the treaty was with HCU, the treaty contained a clause that disputes would be arbitrated by a third party named Fathers of Deployment. Again, these are the English translations, and if anyone of the Roswell Secret club had questions, they held their tongue. The names really didn't matter.

The unbelievable point was that Harry S. Truman from Missouri had made an agreement with intelligent creatures not of this world who promised to provide us certain information and services in exchange for the ability to study Earth people.

The treaty turned out to be remarkably simple.

At specific intervals we would hail the HCU using a specific, ultra-high-frequency radio channel (at this time in history only the military used UHF communication. It was later changed to ELF, extremely low frequency, and eventually to secured digital-satellite-coded transmissions). The call to HCU would initiate question-and-answer sessions where the HCU provided answers to questions of a scientific nature as well as offering the basics of new technology. The promise in the treated stated that while the HCU would not necessarily answer all questions or aid in the development of all technologies, it guaranteed the United States of America would remain the technologically superior nation on Earth.

In addition to helping with weapons development, the HCU provided information to guarantee America's global dominance in medicine, computers, space travel, and communications.

The treaty clearly spelled-out the HCU would not provide us with any equipment or machines, only information that would put us on and keep us on the fast track to making our own advances.

What did they receive? Not much. The United States would immediately stop using the Project Rainbow beam projectors and do everything in its power to stop nuclear testing on Earth. The HUC could conduct DNA studies on human beings and other animals. The studies would be secret, and no living humans would be seriously injured. The purpose of the study was to understand human DNA in order to advance medicine, eradicate diseases, and prepare humans for a broader role with our universal neighbors.

Truman didn't know it yet, but he had been dead right about trading for beads: they were the Dutch colonist, we were the Lenape Indians, and our planet was the Manhattan island.

Norfolk, VA July 7th

“Let loose the dogs. Exodus 11:3-6.” Jim Sees typed “OK,” hit send, and stared at the words on the screen—terrified.

Jim closed the Internet connection, restarted his browser. When his homepage opened, he went to Excite.com and opened a never-before-used e-mail account. The inbox contained a single e-mail sent seconds earlier from Bruno Hauptmann 0747. It said, “White panel van for sale. $1500.”

Jim stood. He had fifteen minutes to prepare. He turned off the computer and vanished into his kitchen.

At 4:50 AM he went into the basement to fetch the girl and Sister Fran. The girl sat on a well-worn Hello Kitty pillow near the edge of a hooked rug. The pillow was very important: so was the bag of marbles. Swaying slightly back and forth, she floated her index finger over the nine marbles on the rug then hovered over one until she completed humming a note. As each note faded, she pointed to another marble and hummed a different note.

Sister Fran leaned forward in a chair reading an old People magazine, the backs of her forearms resting on her thighs. Her head lifted, peering over her reading glasses, when Jim entered.

She closed the magazine and stood.

Jim looked around the room as if he saw the pine-paneled walls for the first time and at the same time was saying good-bye to a place of comfort. “We need to be upstairs in five minutes.”

Sister Fran spoke to the girl in hardly more than a whisper, put the marbles back, and handed the bag to her. The girl stood holding her Hello Kitty pillow. Sister Fran handed her the bag of marbles then followed her up the stairs. In the kitchen, the two held hands and watched out the kitchen window for their ride.

When Sister Fran and the girl arrived this morning around 3 o’clock, they were not what Jim expected. The nun wore jeans and

a plaid shirt with the tail out. Her short, gray hair was little more than a military crop. She was a large woman: not fat, big. Sister Fran was about 5' 10" and weighed in the neighborhood of 180 pounds. She moved with a gliding grace more like a tai chi master than a sixty-seven-year-old nun. Sister Fran had been the girl's primary teacher for the last eight years.

The girl, Melanie, was obviously autistic or something, and looked as if she suffered a mild case of Down's syndrome.

Jim watched a black SUV roll slowly down the alley. Its darkened windows gave no hint of its occupants. This was definitely not their ride. Shit! he thought. It's going bad already.

The SUV stopped. The passenger door opened and closed and a teenage boy ran into the backdoor of a house across the alley. Relief washed over Jim as the SUV pulled away and his stomach slowly unknotted. Jim realized the dualism of his situation. He hated the nerve-racking uncertainty, yet realized this frightening experience made him feel alive for the first time in years.

A white Ford panel van turned into the alley then pulled into his short driveway.

Jim opened the back door, waved, then went back inside the kitchen. He didn't have to speak. Sister Fran, with the girl in tow, headed to the van. They passed the driver on his way into the house without speaking.

The driver entered carrying a small toolbox and a plastic, five-gallon fuel tank. He was a clean-cut, well-built man, in his mid-thirties. He opened the toolbox and went to work.

Before leaving Jim turned to make sure everything was on the kitchen table. His wallet, passport, credit cards, cell phone (sans SIM card), computer hard drive. and checkbook—basically his life waited to be consumed.

Five minutes later, as the van accelerated onto the freeway, they heard distant sirens: fire trucks rushing to Jim's flaming house. Jim sat buckled into the passenger seat. Sister Fran and the girl sat cross-legged on a futon that nearly filled the back of the van.

The driver's eyes nervously shot between the road and the rearview mirror. So far no one had spoken.

"I don't know about you," Jim said, "but I've never done anything like this. I am about to mess my pants."

"Me too," replied the driver.

The driver seemed anxious but not scared shitless like Jim. Maybe he wasn't so new to illegal, covert escapades.

Watching the driver's cool, blue eyes flick between the mirrors and the road ahead, Jim asked, "Why are you doing this?"

"Why are you?" he shot back.

"I asked first," said Jim.

"As I understand it, the less we know about each other the better." The driver then added, "I have my reasons."

"You're right," Jim said, sitting back and trying to relax enough to reduce the nervous tension crawling along his spine like dark electricity.

"I hope they don't put the fire out," Jim said, thinking about his identification on the kitchen table.

"Not a chance," the driver said as he changed lanes.

The girl had fallen asleep. Sister Fran, if that was her name, looked at Jim with an almost-angelic, annoying, little smile. Jim needed a drink.

The only thing Jim knew about the girl was her name, Melanie, and that he was involved in kidnapping her—from the federal government.

The white van continued south on the freeway. The driver constantly watched his mirrors and cruised at the speed limit.

A cell phone rang in the front seat.

The driver looked in a shoe-box-sized carton and answered the ringing phone. After a few seconds he said, "Okay."

He removed the battery from the cell phone as he said, "In the passenger side seat pocket, there's a road atlas. Tell me how to get to I-66. We are going to Huntsville, Alabama."

Jim read the directions to the driver then sat back. What's in Huntsville? he wondered, closing his eyes and settling in for the eight-hour drive. His adrenalin level was too high to sleep, so he tried clearing his mind with breathing exercises. Instead his mind recalled the start of this adventure. It was hard to believe so much had changed in less than four months.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Genetics was a fairly new science in 1952. Truman knew almost nothing compared to what we know today. Part of what we know today is because Truman understood so little.

Earlier I said this book is not about quantum physics. It is not about genetics either. My assignment to the Roswell Incident and subsequent documents is the only reason I know anything about these topics at all.

A basic understanding of genetic mutations is essential to grasping the ramifications of Truman's treaty.

Between 1856 and 1863, Father Gregor Mendel grew peas, Pisum sativum to be exact. Born into a poor Austrian family, he was lucky enough to have attended and excelled in a local school. He could not afford university, so a teacher suggested he join the Augustine monks, who would pay for continued education. After graduating, he moved into a monastery and taught science and math to local students and neophytes.

Soon after settling into a monk's life, he obtained permission to use a portion of the monastery's garden and began growing peas—lots of peas. Over the next seven years he planted, spliced, pollinated, cross-pollinated, and cataloged details for about 29,000 pea plants. After seven years he became the abbot and was too busy to grow peas.

By 1865 Mendel had organized his work into a paper that primarily focused on hybridization, not heredity. It was viewed as having little impact and was cited only three times by academics over the next thirty-five years. In all three cases it was criticized. Today it is considered a seminal work in genetics, and Father Gregor is called the "Father of Genetics," which no matter how

you cut it is better than being known as Pea Pa.

Mendel's work demonstrated and proved the existence of recessive and dominant aspects of genes.

Allele (pronounced ah-leel) is short for the Greek word allelomorph, which means 'other form.' An allele is one of two or more forms of a DNA sequence of a specific gene. Each side of the chromosome double helix is marked with sets of allele. Depending upon how the allele are located and match their counter set on the strand of the other helix, they make a trait dominant or recessive.

Mendel's peas provide a clear explanation of what this means.

His study showed that one in four pea plants had purebred, recessive alleles, two out of four were hybrid, and one out of four were purebred dominant. His experiments led him to make two generalizations, the Law of Segregation and the Law of Independent Assortment, which later became known as Mendel's Laws of Inheritance.

Mendel crossed two pea plants. The first has dominant allele that create a short vine and recessive allele that produce white pea shells. The other possesses recessive allele for long vines and dominate allele for green pea shells. The generation of this combination produces four plants that are all short vined with green pea shells. These four pollinate to produce sixteen plants that break down as:

9 plants with short vines and green peas

3 plants with long vines and green peas

3 plants with short vines and white peas

1 plant with long vines and white peas

Mendel's ratio of the appearance of recessive genes in future generations is 9:3:3:1. One in sixteen of the third generation will

exhibit the traits of both recessive allele sets.

If it happens in peas that the long-vine, white-pea variety bears more fruit, then farmers breed to fill their fields with this type of plant. The same is true for cotton, corn, and cows.

Most credible scientists today believe evolution is about one thing—the explanation for the changes of allele over millions of years.

The aliens have grown peas a very long time.

CHAPTER TWELVE: Norfolk, VA, Previous March

Jim Sees stared blankly at the screen. Too many Irish whiskeys down the hatch for another night. He was about to go to bed when the chat box filled with words.

"Are you the author of Otherworld?" is sent by someone named 07-1947.

Written ten years ago, it was one of four books he had published that cursed him with just enough financial security to drink too much night after night. Although not his best work, it was the one of which he was most proud. Jim Sees, his real as well as his online name, was occasionally recognized by someone on one of the conspiracy websites he trolled trying to catch ideas for his next book, the one he planned to start writing next week—every week.

He had been fishing for five years. Too many whiskeys down the hatch for him to come up with his own ideas.

It was time for bed. He was drunk, again. "Goodnight," he typed and closed his web browser.

The next afternoon 07-1947 sent him a message in a different conspiracy chat room. It said, "Are you?"

Somewhat surprised, he thought about answering. He had some notoriety from speaking on the UFO and New Age circuits, but he had never been stalked.

What the hell, he thought and typed, "Yes."

Almost instantly the words snapped onto the screen, "Can we go to private chat?"

“Why?” Jim Sees typed, wondering why he responded at all.

“I need your help,” appeared on his screen.

Jim thought about his next move. The guy on the other end was probably a total wack job.

“How did you find me today?” Jim typed.

“I have been reading what you say online,” 07-1947 answered.

Wack job confirmed, thought Jim. It was time to end this.

“Don’t log off. I’m not a stalker. I’m not even a fan of your writing. I am a fan of what you wrote. You are right and we are in trouble,” appeared on the screen, and now Jim was torn. He was not interested in chatting with a high-strung UFO-ologist who believed crop circles are the results of aliens mining for breakfast cereals. He did enjoy the notion that 07-1947 thought he was right.

“About what?” he typed.

“Stonehenge was a stone hinge,” came the reply.

Well, at least he read the book, Jim thought. I guess it can’t hurt to hear what he has to say.

Jim Sees clicked the box by 07-1947’s name and a private chat window opened.

“I know things. I am selling you your next novel, your first blockbuster.” There was a pause; Jim thought about clicking off then he saw that 07-1947 was typing a message.

“You won’t believe me at first. You will freak out. So I will start slow to keep you with me.”

Jim typed, “What do you mean, selling me my next novel?”

“Just that.” The reply was almost too quick, as if 07-1947 had already typed it and hit the send button. The next line flowed across the chat-box window. “I am going to trade you information for a guaranteed best seller.”

Jim poured his first drink of the day, early even by his standards. This guy was a fucking kook. He probably had some tired idea about the Loch Ness monster, Yetis, or aliens invading birthday parties in Mexico City.

The psychological effect of Jim's first two sips of whiskey steadied his hand and calmed his instinct to unplug and change his screen name before going back to any more websites. What the hell, he thought, then typed, "I'm sure you are going to want your money up front, before you give me the idea."

"No, nothing like that," came the reply. "I need your help; I don't need money."

"Sounding better all the time," Jim typed and added a smiley face.

"In fact, if things go as planned, I'll be giving you money." Jim studied this line from 7-1947.

"Like I said, sounding better all the time," Jim typed.

"This is the easiest part," appeared on Jim's screen followed by, "convincing you I am not another nut."

"Convince away," Jim entered.

"I've followed you in chat rooms. Some of what you say hint you know things you should not. I've researched you and feel you can be trusted enough to begin this process. I want you to write a book to make the public aware of the truth—a truth that no one even suspects. I will give you everything you need."

Jim sighed, thinking, A total wack job. He typed, "I think I'll pass. But thanks just the same."

"I assure you, in a few days you will want to know more."

Jim held off shutting down the connection. Whoever this was, he or she had a genuine gift for intrigue. Even if he was a nutcase,

maybe there was something to be gained and used in the next book Jim was about to start next week, or the week after at the very latest.

Jim thought then typed, “You sound practiced. I get the feeling I am not the first you have approached.”

Jim waited and then his chat box read, “You are the first recruited to write the story.”

“Why should I believe any of this?” Jim wrote.

“Finally,” 07-1947 replied, “you want proof. It took you long enough.”

“If, and that’s a big if,” Jim answered, “I decide to work with you, there has to be a certain level of credibility and eventually trust.”

“Fair enough,” 07-1947 replied then added, “I’ll email you a PDF. Read it, research it on your own, then I’ll meet up with you next week in a chat room.”

“Great. My email is jimsees21@...,” Jim stopped typing as an e-mail arrived in his Outlook and 07-1947 signed off the chat room.

Jim thought, “This guy is scary—scary but good.”

Jim opened the PDF and started reading. He could not stop.

“Have you read it?” 07-1947’s message opened in a speech bubble on the website Jim Sees was absently poking around in. It had been two days since he read the file.

Jim’s reaction to the file was one of disbelief and curiosity. He had gone in and out of every related website he could think of, trying to verify the story. No one on the Internet knew about this. The odds were pretty good it was invented by 07-1947 to hook him into some mad scheme. Yet there was something about it. It was so straightforward and authoritative. Essentially, the document

was about a computer virus that was disrupting the nuclear centrifuges at Iran's nonexistent nuclear-enrichment facility. The virus eroded their ability to enrich plutonium for the rocket warheads they weren't making to fall on Israel. The only details that could be confirmed were the names of some companies that were contracted as part of Iran's nuclear effort. Jim had to admit, true or not, it was a hell of a story executed by a cyber James Bond.

"I read it," Sees typed. "Great yarn, wish it were true."

07-1947 replied, "The truth will out. What matters is that you know that I know things that people outside of spooky agencies shouldn't."

"Maybe," Jim typed, "but why would you know secret stuff?"

"Because I am freshly out of one of those spooky agencies," flashed the reply.

Jim thought then typed, "In the movies, they kill people like that."

07-1947's message shot back, "In real life too."

"Then how come you are alive and talking to a stranger who might turn you in?" Jim replied smugly.

"Because I need your help and in return I will help you," 07-1947 typed.

Jim thought a moment then replied, "If what you say is true, what can you offer me that would make me risk getting involved with a fugitive?"

"Two things: Go to the chat room at your favorite alien abduction website. I'll open a private chat and invite you when you are logged in." 07-1947 signed off.

Jim wondered why he was doing this. At best this guy was only

a clever nut job. At worst he was a fugitive from the CIA or some other agency. Against his better judgment, he logged on to the website, received the invitation to private chat, and typed, “So, what are the two things?”

07-1947’s message appeared, “I already told you one. You are going to write a book about this. You don’t believe me yet, but you will be famous, a top-selling author. The big break you have been waiting for.”

Jim poured his second whiskey of the day then responded, “I don’t buy that for a minute, but even if I did, what’s the second reason?”

“I can help you get your family back.” O7-1947’s words made Jim lean back from the screen, as if he had been slapped.

How did this guy know about his family? What did he know? More importantly, why did he know?

Maybe Jim had underestimated the danger in toying with 07-1947. Maybe Jim was being set up to be coerced into something very wrong. He thought about logging off, unplugging his computer then resurfacing with a new cyber identity in a week.

So that is what he did.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Now the part I hate. This is where the government needs for you to stop reading rubbish about aliens coming into people's homes. People who talk about being abducted are obviously emotionally deficient, psychologically defective neurotics who need attention to feed their egos in their otherwise drab existences. That is, unless they are talking to a roomful of emotionally deficient, psychologically defective….

The definition of alien abduction found on Wikipedia is:

The terms alien abduction or abduction phenomenon describe "subjectively real memories of being taken secretly against one's will by apparently nonhuman entities and subjected to complex physical and psychological procedures." People claiming to have been abducted are usually called "abductees" or "experiencers." Typical claims involve being subjected to a forced medical examination that emphasizes their reproductive system. Abductees sometimes claim to have been warned against environmental abuse and the dangers of nuclear weapons.

This begs the question: are any of these experiences objective?

The short answer is yes. There is truth (and perverted wisdom) in blaming our herding instinct for impacting the psychologically needy and falsely increasing the number of events that are purely subjective memories. Saying all alien abductions are manifest fantasies is simply another giant lie in the avalanche of disinformation pouring down Mt. Washington, DC.

The next question is: if some occurrences are real, how many have there been?

Again, the short answer is no one really knows, except maybe

the aliens. Authors, and TV and movie writers, have claimed up to 5 percent of the world's population has been abducted. That's just crazy. A more conservative number, according to the heirs of the Roswell Incident, is that between 1953 and 2010 approximately 300,000 Americans experienced real encounters with representatives of Husbands of Commerce Utility. The number of people claiming to have had encounters could be fifty times greater.

It is believed the HCU began their studies in earnest in 1953, a few months after the Truman Treaty was in place. The physical examinations are part of the studies we know as alien abductions. In 1953 there were between one and two thousand abductions/examinations. The number has increased each year until the current annual estimate is around 40,000 in the United States. Many of the 40,000 visits include follow-up house calls to previously examined patients. The best guess is that about 35,000 new humans are taken and examined each year.

The physical reality of abductions is hotly debated—but not here. It is imperative to the government that even the idea of little gray men entering a home, kidnapping a sleeping victim, then taking them to another location to stick things up their nose and butt remains absurd to the general population. If too many people believed, there would be panic in the streets and citizens demanding protection and explanations, not to mention a run on petroleum lubricants. There are dozens of books on the subject. You can draw your own conclusion. For the moment, suspend disbelief and go along for the ride, if for no other reason than to see what all this has to do with James Forrestal, the Philadelphia Experiment, and your not-so-distant future.

A number of psychological studies have been conducted on people claiming to be abductees. Over a period of years, each

study examined (often using hypnosis to obtain details) between 200 and 800 individuals who were prescreened to weed out those who might have created a false memory of a fictitious event for psychological reasons.

The people in the studies defy pigeon-holing. They are from every ethnic, educational, and economic background. The fabric of their recollections share common threads as outlined below.

Abduction: The subject is taken from their current environment. Most often they are taken from bedrooms while sleeping, but there are cases when they were taken from offices, parking lots, cars, and boats.

Examination: The subjects frequently undergo invasive physical procedures that include examination, stimulation, and implantation of the sex organs and orifices. Several older abductees (over 40 years old) have been rejected for physical reasons, including past, surgically caused infertility.

Conference: The hosts communicate with the subjects. This takes several forms. The host may communicate telepathically and ask the subject to answer questions that are psychologically revealing. The subject may be shown 'projected' images (sometimes hallucinations) and required to interact and role-play with these events. Some are required to answer questions. Others are tested with visual stimulation similar to parts of an IQ test. After having passed previous tests, the subject may be placed in front of a complicated-looking machine and told to operate it. The host stands back or leaves (maybe symbolizing withdrawing from the subject's mind) and the subject 'plays' with the device until they gradually become aware they do know how to work the machine.

Tour: Whether the host intends to provide a tour or if the

subject is simply being moved from area to area within the facility, the subject is under the impression he is being given a tour.

Loss of Memory: Subjects usually quickly forget the details of their experience, and most don't remember it even happened at all until some time later when a random event triggers a memory.

Return: The subjects are returned to their Earthly environment. Most are placed back exactly where they were when the misadventure began, but sometimes, for unknown reasons, the hosts place them in a different physical location.

Loss of Time: Most subjects experience a block of lost time between what they last recall doing and the moment awareness returns.

Theophany: Subjects may have a feeling of a connection to God or their higher power. They feel a connection, oneness with the Universe. This feeling is usually not explored by the subject at the time.

Aftermath: This occurs if and after the subject remembers events of the abduction and spends time and energy dealing with the psychology of abduction events.

A broad overview of the stories of hundreds of people who were included in previous studies present something very clear: every event is highly orchestrated. Every action is predetermined. There is no sitting in a waiting room. The beings conducting the studies are task-oriented and focused on completing their portions of the study as efficiently as possible. They seem to function in units of three. Sometimes taller beings are present acting as supervisors, monitors, or specialists.

The majority of abductees are adults, but since the mid 1970s many children began reporting abductions. In some cases, one of their parents previously reported abduction.

One last element of an abduction scenario that is not standard but reported often enough to justify inclusion is the child presentation. As the name conjures, this involves the aliens showing an infant to the subject. The infant appears to be a hybrid of humans and the Grays.

Because of the Truman Treaty, every US president knows abduction/examinations of humans and animal mutilations take place on a large scale. It was easy for them to turn a blind eye because of the steady stream of benefits we received from the treaty.

Tucked away at research facilities and universities all over the world are groups of scientists and engineers working on miracle breakthroughs that will provide critical pieces to the assembly of everything from new propulsion techniques, free energy (it won't be free to us), antigravity, mind control, and every other imaginable scientific topic. These groups are funded and often fed key information to hurry along their progress. Most are compartmented and the researchers are not aware their breakthroughs create falling dominoes in the creation of larger projects.

The ever-changing guard of the Roswell illuminati knew about the abductions of humans. They knew about the increasing numbers of people being abducted. They knew the examinations were invasive and psychologically damaging. Most damning, they knew the ultimate goal was to genetically alter specific human candidates.

It was not until the 1990s when the alien's lines of falling dominoes began to spell a word—one with horrifying implications.

In July 2002, two Roswell illuminati, President George Bush

and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, retraced Truman's trip into the high desert to renew the Truman Treaty. The HCU stood them up. The treaty expired at midnight and we stopped receiving beneficial contacts from the party of the second part.

By then we knew the goal of the abductions, but were addicted to the technology and willing to renegotiate. The HCU no longer needed our permission or cooperation. The number of genetically altered humans approached critical mass, and we no longer had the ability to stop them.

It turns out the HCU is a patient bunch. Unlike us, their goals are long-term. Not long-term like five, fifty, or even a hundred years.

Had it not been for an epidemic during the 1990s, we still might not know what the HCU was up to.

Now hear this.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN: White Ford Van

“Reservoir Dogs,” Jim said to the driver. Neither of them had spoken since the ‘less we know’ conversation.

“What?” The man’s grip on the wheel tightened when Jim spoke. The man’s arms were large, with defined muscles.

“The movie,” Jim responded. “All the characters had made-up names, like Mr. Green. Mr. White. I was just thinking that since we will be together at least until Huntsville, we need to be able to communicate.”

The driver gave Jim a quick glance and a brief grin. “Good idea. I’ll be Mr. Blue. Sister Fran and Melanie have names, unfortunately. Who do you want to be?”

Jim thought about it a moment. He kept thinking about how a drink would be good about now. He really needed a drink. Or at least he thought he did. Drinking had ruined his life and now, crazy as it was, 07-1947 had provided him a chance to get it back. It was the second thing helping 07-1947 could do for him.

“Mr. Anon,” Jim said. “You know, like anonymous. So, Mr. Blue, why are you driving a rented panel van to Huntsville, Alabama?” Jim asked, rolling the stiffness out of his neck.

“The less we know, remember.” The driver seemed as fresh as when they had started.

“Can we at least talk about sports or something? I’m really nervous and talking helps,” Jim said.

“What sport do you want to talk about?” the driver asked.

“None, really. I don’t care much for sports.” Jim laughed softly then added, “How about 07-1947? What do you know about him?”

“Who?” Mr. Blue asked before he realized Jim was talking about the man he knew as Heaven’s Gate. Then he added, “Oh, you mean the man we are helping.”

“Yeah, if helping is what you want to call going on the run with a Secret Service, government-nanny nun and a kidnapped, autistic, ten-year-old girl,” Jim said. “Yeah, what do you know about that guy?”

“Nothing,” Mr. Blue lied. “All I know is someone saved my life in Afghanistan. I don’t know who it was, but your 07 does and he is calling in the chip I owe.”

“Wow. He’s saving my life too, in a different way. He’s…”

Another disposable cell phone rang in the box between their seats. Mr. Blue answered the phone that was lit and buzzing.

“Wait a minute. There’s a sign coming up. It says Christiansburg 14 miles.” Mr. Blue stopped talking and listened. Jim could only tell the voice on the other end was soft and calm.”

“Got it,” Mr. Blue said. The phone call ended and he began dismantling it so he could discard pieces along the roadside.

“Litterer,” Jim said as he threw the first piece out the window. “Change of plans?”

“No. We are swapping cars at a truck stop on highway 460, not far up the road,” Mr. Blue answered.

“Will we have time to pee?” It was Sister Fran. “Melanie will need to go as soon as she wakes up. It won’t do to let her wet the bed. It took years to get her to stop.”

“Sure, Sister,” Mr. Blue said. “We can get something to eat too.”

“Melanie and I will use the outdoor facilities. Park where we won’t be noticed. By now our photos and some bogus, kidnap Amber Alert is everywhere. The two of us can’t be seen. Get us

some orange juice and ham sandwiches; they are Melanie's favorites," Sister Fran said, rising to her knees so she could see between the front seats.

Jim wondered if somehow his photo was, as they say on the reality TV shows, 'on the wire." He wondered what Annie, his ex-wife, would think of seeing his photo on America's Most Wanted. He didn't even want to think about that. It would end all chances of reconciling with her and the kids. So far everything 07 said had come true, and he told Jim if he followed the plan he and Annie will end up back together.

Mr. Blue pulled up to the front of the store portion of the truck stop and said, "I'm changing your name. You are now Mr. Braveheart. Mr. Anonymous is too negative. It creates low self-esteem. You go in, get me a large coffee, black, the stuff Sister Fran wants, and whatever you want." He poked five twenty-dollar bills at Jim and continued, "Oh yeah, get another six-pack of water for the cooler, some toilet paper, and anything else you think we might need. I'll be back here in a silver Mercedes SUV in ten minutes."

Jim replied in the affirmative and noticed Melanie was awake and rubbing her eyes as he left the van. In the store, he went to the bathroom then bought the things on his mental list and, as an afterthought, picked up an LED reading light to use for the map and a dark-chocolate Dove bar.

He left the store and the silver SUV pulled up. The windows were as darkly tinted as any he had ever seen. Inside he handed the bags to Sister Fran between the front seats, snapped his seat belt, and let the acceleration push him back as Mr. Blue pulled out of the truck-stop parking lot.

"Can I turn on the overhead light?" Sister Fran asked. "Melanie

wants her marbles."

Jim had not heard a word from Melanie. Mr. Blue said, "Better not, someone might see in."

"How about this?" Jim offered up the LED reading light.

"That will work if you keep it low," Mr. Blue said as Jim handed it back to Sister Fran, who was setting up so Melanie could see her marbles on the floor mat.

Jim thought buying the reading lamp was a stroke of luck. It wasn't luck at all.

As Jim prepared to take his first bite of the Dove bar, he felt Sister Fran's hand on his shoulder. "She wants some," Sister Fran said, smiling that annoying little smile.

Melanie was focused on her nine marbles, seemingly oblivious to the conversation. Jim handed Sister Fran the stick end of the ice cream bar. She took it and instantly, without looking up, Melanie reached for it. She took it from Sister Fran, took a small bite, and then handed it back.

"Does she want any more?" Jim asked kindly. "I don't really need it."

"Thank you, Mr.Braveheart. That was all she wanted. She says thank you." Sister Fran sat back, opening a bottle of water.

"I didn't hear her say anything. Is she psychic or something?" Jim said, looking at Melanie as if for the first time.

"Something," Sister Fran answered and took a drink of water.

The driver pulled into a rest stop and asked Jim, "You seem wide awake. Can you drive for a while so I can get some sleep?"

They switched seats. Jim looked at the route to Huntsville and pulled back on to the freeway.

The overcast sky and the rhythm of the highway allowed Jim to

relax a little, and his mind went back to how he came to be a candidate for America's Most Wanted.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN: Fairfax Drive, Arlington, VA

"Yes sir," the middle-aged woman in the perfectly pressed, gray pantsuit said into the phone. Her face flushed. She hated anything that smelled of failure, and right now it was being inferred she reeked of it. The guy doing the inferring was Lance Swaggert, a thirty-something regional campaign manager whose only expertise since graduating from Princeton was helping reelect politicians. He had parlayed this into an undersecretary post at Homeland Security. Kate called Lance Swaggert 'TLS': the little shit. "Sir," she emphasized the word a little too much, "we are sharing everything we know or think we know with your office, the FBI, the CIA, and the NSA."

There was a pause while she listened, the expression on her face annoyed as her skin darkened a shade. "No sir, we have not sent anyone anything in the last half hour because we don't have anything new." Only those who had worked with her for years could detect the taste of anger in her voice.

The voice on the phone grew louder, and she held the receiver from her ear, rolling her eyes, wanting this to be over. The others in the room heard the voice coming out of the phone almost as a WHA-WHA-WHA-WHA-WHA-WHA-BLAH-BLAH, then very distinctly, "DO YOU UNDERSTAND?"

"Clearly, sir. Good-bye." She placed the receiver down before TLS could add any other unnecessary threats or urgings.

She said to the others in the room, "I'm going out for a smoke. Come get me if you get anything." What she really wanted was to go out for a drink, but there would be none of that until the girl

was found and safely back in the care of Uncle Sam.

Tom Cray looked up from his array of computer screens and watched his boss walk out of the room. She doesn't deserve this, he thought, and decided to take a break himself. They had been on their version of DEFCON 1 for more than fifteen hours, and he had not been to the bathroom in the last six or seven. The coffee in his bladder demanded attention.

Tom had been with this unit longer than anyone currently working. He was transferred from another covert government computer unit after September 11, 2001. He'd been here nearly ten years, and still missed the camaraderie of the old team. They had dubbed themselves the Original Geeks, and they were proud of their uncanny programming prowess.

When he was transferred to the newly formed Department of Homeland Security's Interception Department, he felt it was the patriotic thing to do. Sure he would miss his old team, but he would help build a new team.

Wrong.

He was twenty years senior to everyone else at Team Intercept. His first boss, a twenty-something, political appointee who didn't know shit from shinola about anything other than running political campaigns, didn't like him from the start. Tom was worried the asshole might start appreciating his skill and keep him. If the boss wanted him transferred, he would most likely go back to his beloved Geeks. There weren't too many other places they could put him because of how much he knew.

Bad luck struck again. Tom's new boss was so inept even the government couldn't overlook his lack of skills and ability to get things done. After a little more than a year, he was promoted and replaced with Katherine Hollister. Kate, as she introduced herself,

didn't know shit from shinola about things high tech. What she knew about was managing an FBI field team in the heat of battle. She was also smart—scary smart. When it came to fitting tiny clues—things others didn't even recognize as clues—into the puzzle, it was as if she were psychic. She wasn't always fast about it. Sometimes it took a day or two, even a week before she came back saying, "Bring up the file you showed me last week on such-and-such." She would stare at it for a few minutes, then share her eureka moment with the rest of the team. She was almost always right when this happened, and the other members of the unit came to trust her sparks of brilliance.

Tom and Kate understood each other. She knew who he was and what he could do. She also bridged the age gap between Tom and the others in the unit.

She didn't deserve the treatment she was receiving from whatever under-assistant secretary of Homeland Security who was unlucky enough to be there this week.

How did Tom know she didn't deserve it? Because he knew who was behind the missing girl. He had met him a couple of times at Geek Happy Hour. The boss of the Geeks, Bob Cleburne, had known James Tate a long time. They had worked together, gone fishing together, and could be friends because both were equally trusted by the keepers of the SUVs. Tom didn't know James Tate that well himself, primarily from stories Bob Cleburne had related. But he knew this: Tate had skipped out on his government retirement three years ago and vanished from the grid. Everything at the government's intelligence disposal was at one time or another focused on finding him.

But Tate was good. Tom suspected Tate had planned this for years. Every now and then a clue would pop up—usually from the Internet—that hinted Tate was within reach, or at least on the

planet, but most of the time the clue led to a dead end. If half of what Bob Cleburne said about Tate was true, catching him would be a full-time job for the US government.

So now, for the last fifteen hours, Team Intercept had been evaluating computer-filtered fragments of cell phone calls, text messages, e-mails, chat rooms, and instant messages looking for anything that would lead to the missing girl and her teacher—a nun for Christ's sake—or to Tate, who was suspected of organizing the kidnapping.

Tom Cray was back at his desk and wondering for the fiftieth time who this little girl, Melanie, was and why the entire dark side of the American government was full throttle after her.

Kate smelled of cigarettes as she passed his desk.

Tom's primary function here was to continuously create code that made it easier to eliminate messages from the filtering system. Often innocent message fragments slipped past the computer filters and triggered human attention. Tom kept himself busy cutting down the number of messages that passed all his digital checkpoints. Since he started programming for Intercept, Tom had reduced the number of filtered messages getting through to the team from thousands a day to hundreds a day.

The hundreds each had to be investigated and cleared in this office. The remaining thousands were sent to lower-priority check points. They were still investigated, but not as quickly or intensely.

In the current crisis, Tom was investigating fragments with the rest of the team.

Tom put on his headset and returned to his displays. Six large monitors hung from ceiling mounts, and numerous small, specialized displays crowded the table. They displayed everything from satellite images, to GPS positions on road maps, to cell phone

conversations, to Internet traffic. All the information came from a legendary supercomputer somewhere in America. Tom always wondered how many more Team Intercepts there were double- and triple-checking. If he ran things there would be plenty, but the way the government worked there might not be any.

Four other men had similar electronic arrays in the room.

Fifteen hours ago Team Intercept received word of the abduction.

His boss, Special Agent Kate Hollister, paced between the tables. On the phone again, she spoke softly into a headset. It appeared as if TLS had tattled to his boss. "Mr. Secretary, we are doing everything possible. You know this takes time; we will get her back." She paused to listen again, then continued, "No sir, 07 has not surfaced since Madrid." What she wanted to say was, "Fuck-off, asshole. You will be lucky to find a job after the next election so leave the hunting to those who are here for the long haul." What she said was, "Yes, sir. I know that was a long time ago. Apparently the mishandling of Bamberg and Madrid were enough to chase him deeper into the thicket."

She stopped to listen, exasperation shaping her face. She rolled her eyes, wondering why cabinet members always thought they knew best. "Yes sir. We know he's key. We will get him," she concluded, then finished the sentence to herself, "eventually, if we keep at it long enough, hard enough and are lucky enough."

Cray stopped eavesdropping and checked a monitor, which displayed a photo of a woman and a girl exiting a Mercedes SUV at a gas station. Next to the grainy image of the vehicle was an ID photo of a woman along with DARPA credentials. Beneath the photo was the flashing message: Priority Match. The facial recognition software had sharpened the focus of an older woman's

face.

It was the nun, Sister Fran, and the girl.

"Kate," Cray said softly, "we got something."

Cray knew that the nun could not have pulled this off without help, but other than strong suspicions that Tate had masterminded the operation, there were no other suspects, so facial recognition had no photos to filter among the millions of images it accessed hourly.

Kate leaned over his shoulder, looking at Cray's screen. The others in the room left their stations and moved toward Cray's desk.

"Shell Station security camera off I-31 near Cleveland, Tennessee. The image was taken at 3:13 PM." Tom typed some keys and highlighted the part of the vehicle that was visible in the photo. A few seconds later a window opened that said, "2005 Mercedes SUV. 93 percent probability."

Kate stood straight. "Send what you have to the Little Shit at Homeland and the usual crowd." She picked up her phone, pulled up contacts on her computer, and dialed the FBI field office in Chattanooga, Tennessee.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN: Silver Mercedes SUV

Jim Sees exited the freeway and stopped in front of the pumps at a Shell station a little after 3:00 PM. Next to the station was a cedar-shake-covered structure with a hand-painted sign reading: Martha's Café & Rock Shop. Mr. Blue woke when the Mercedes decelerated, looked at his watch, then rubbed his eyes and said, "I need a pee break."

"Us too," came from Sister Fran in the back seat.

"Sister," Jim said, "there's not much cover at the station. Do you want me to find some woods or a side road?"

"It is probably better to be safe...." The nun stopped when she heard the cell phone buzz in the box in the front seat.

Mr. Blue answered the phone. He listened, occasionally responding with a 'yes' or 'no.' He looked at his watch then said, "We should be in Huntsville in three hours."

Mr. Blue listened again, saying, "Yes, sir," several times.

Everyone was quiet except Melanie. She moaned softly and rocked in her seat with her hands between her thighs.

"She needs to go," said Sister Fran opening the door and helping Melanie out of her seat belt.

Mr. Blue ended the call and said, "You fill the tank, I'll get some water and some dinner to go. We need to get moving." He shoved the cell phone in his pocket as he went into Martha's Café and Rock Shop.

Jim went inside and handed the clerk four twenty-dollar bills then went back to the pump. He topped off the tank as Fran and Melanie returned to the Mercedes. Mr. Blue came out with a shopping bag, sat it on the front seat, and stretched his muscular

frame.

Jim went inside, peed, picked up a Dove bar, retrieved his change, and went back to the SUV. Mr. Blue was in the passenger seat, so Jim sat behind the wheel.

They pulled back on to the highway with about three hours before they reached Huntsville and whatever awaited them there.

“What is it, honey? You hungry?” Sister Fran asked, pulling a paper-wrapped hamburger out of the bag Mr. Blue had given her.

Melanie took the burger but continued to stare at the nun. “What do you want, child?” Sister Fran asked of no one in particular.

Mr. Blue said, “Weird. Sister, feel around in the bottom of the bag. I got something for her and she must know it is there.”

Sister Fran came up with a small object wrapped in white tissue paper and Melanie immediately held out her hand.

It was a quartz-crystal sphere, about the diameter of a quarter. It was bigger than any of Melanie’s marbles, but Mr. Blue thought she would like it.

She did. Melanie took the crystal ball, pulled eight marbles out of her bag, and laid them out on the carpeted floor mat in her usual three-by-three pattern, but this time the crystal sphere took the center spot. She began to hover her finger over first one then another marble.

As the sunset and shadows filled the car, Jim Sees twice thought he saw a glow coming from the marbles, but when he turned to look there was none.

Jim, adrenalin rush long gone and replaced by sharp anxiety and visions of dire consequences, said, “Less than three hours we will be in Huntsville and hopefully this will all be over.”

Mr. Blue responded, “For us. It will never be over for them,” nodding to the back seat. Mr. Blue added, “We are actually just passing through Huntsville. The new destination is the Texaco Station in Meridianville about ten miles north of Huntsville.”

“What happens there?” Jim Sees’ fear of being captured was making him less and less secure with having no control over the situation.

“We stay on the loop around the Texaco station until we see a white Suburban with a Kolb Real Estate sign. We let it get in front of us and follow it.”

“The mystery is wearing thin. I would like to speak to 07, or whatever nom du plume he currently employs to ask some questions.” Jim Sees was clearly aggravated.

Mr. Blue cast a side glance and said, “Easy, pardner. I have a feeling we’re coming to the end of the trail.”

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN: Alabama State Patrol

“Fuck,” Jim Sees said under his breath from the driver’s seat when the flashing blue and white lights appeared in the rearview mirror.

“Steady,” Mr. Blue said studying the image in the side mirror. “Don’t panic. You are not speeding. He may pull around us.”

The flashing lights moved in a little closer and paced the Mercedes SUV.

“What should I do?” Jim’s heart raced, his stomach battled instant nausea. His imagination already had him in a bus with barred windows on his way to federal prison.

“Pull over,” Mr. Blue said, taking two items from the glove compartment.

He held out the first item for Jim to take and put the other, a short-barreled .357 Bulldog revolver, in the thigh pocket of his cargo pants.

“What can I do?” Sister Fran asked from the backseat.

Jim had the car stopped and was looking at the clear plastic pouch Blue had handed him. It contained a driver’s license, vehicle registration, and a State Farm insurance card. All were in the name of Nathan Twining of 1947 July Road in Roswell, New Mexico. The license contained a photo of Jim and his real birthdate. He put the car in park and rolled down the window.

Mr. Blue looked in the backseat where Melanie sat, hands cupped, studying the crystal ball. “At this point, Sister, just say a prayer.”

“That’s something I am good at,” she replied putting an arm around Melanie’s shoulders.

Jim's heart hammered as the state policeman approached in the Mercedes's side mirror. He was a big man, bigger than Mr. Blue. He wore his holstered gun on his left hip. He had removed what Jim thought looked like standard-issue police sunglasses and held them in his right hand. His approach was slow, careful, practiced. He studied the car, caught Jim watching him in the mirror, and loosened the strap on his pistol.

Having seen enough episodes of Cops on television, Jim kept both hands on the steering wheel.

The officer bent down and peered in the window. Beneath the broad-brimmed trooper hat, Jim saw a weathered face bearing old acne scars and ice-blue eyes that darted at the car's occupants and contents in an instant. His polished name tag read 'BAKER.'

Trying to appear calm and unconcerned, Jim said, "Officer Baker, was I speeding?"

Baker replied, "License and registration please," as he glanced at each person in the car a second time.

Jim offered him the plastic pouch.

"Please remove the license from the envelope," Baker said, hardly glancing at the item in Jim's hand.

Baker sized up the man in the passenger seat as the only possible physical threat of the group. The woman and child in the backseat seemed unconcerned while the driver, like most people he stopped, tried to appear unconcerned, innocent.

The woman in the backseat might be the little girl's grandmother, though they looked nothing alike. In fact, the little girl looked ill or something.

"Please turn your engine off," Baker said, taking the paperwork and looking at the license then back at Jim. "Mr. Twining, I stopped you because your left rear tire is very low. You may have

picked up a nail. I can help you change it, or there's a Union 76 at the next exit that will do it for you."

Jim let out the air he had unknowingly held in his lungs. "Thank you, Officer Baker. How far is the gas station? I would rather go there and fill up the tank as well."

Baker was bothered. Something niggled him. Instead of handing the papers back to the driver he said, "Let me take a quick look at the tire. Please wait here."

Baker took three steps and squatted down to look at the tire. He rose and slid into the black and silver Ford Crown Victoria patrol car. He typed the Mercedes's plate number into the onboard notebook computer.

He hated niggles. He also prided himself in remembering faces. He could swear he knew Nathanial Twining from somewhere, but he could not quite place him—not yet anyway.

Alabama State Patrol Sergeant Randy Baker regretted only one thing in his eighteen years of policing highways. It happened five years ago. It would never happen again.

The license plate number came back clean. Registered to Nathan Twining of Roswell, New Mexico.

He tapped some more keys with his oversized index finger and the National Amber Alert website appeared.

Something was too familiar about Twining's face. He must have seen it on some bulletin. He also knew there was a current Amber Alert for a girl and a woman. Five years ago he stopped a Toyota pickup with a man who smelled of cigarettes and a little boy sleeping with his head on the man's thigh. He had a niggle then but he wrote it off and did not check. A week later the cadaver dogs found the kidnapped little boy in a shallow grave. The truck was still there but the owner had gone missing. DNA identified a male,

but so far no matches had turned up in the system.

As he moved closer to the computer screen, a book and clipboard slid off the seat and onto the floor. The book was titled Otherworld and it landed facedown, exposing the author's photo: Jim Sees, a.k.a. Nathan Twining.

Baker didn't see it. He was too busy looking at photos of Melanie and Sister Fran.

Jim's relief at discovering they had been stopped because of low tire pressure returned to a thinly veiled panic as the state trooper sat back in his car. Jim knew he would be checking databases. Sister Fran had said she and Melanie were undoubtedly listed on the Amber Alert and every other missing person's electronic list that existed.

"What do we do now?" Jim asked Mr. Blue.

Blue looked up from the road map, gave him a wink, and said, "We wait."

Melanie seemed antsy and moved to shrug Sister Fran's arm off her. Her expression did not change, but something was making her uncomfortable. She held the crystal marble in a tightly clenched little fist. She started rocking forward and backwards. Then she started humming, a soft, unrecognizable, but not unpleasant tune.

Sister Fran seemed surprised by the behavior. "This is new," she said, taking her hands off Melanie and giving her room.

Jim nearly shit his pants when Baker exited the car, twelve-gauge pump shotgun in one hand and the patrol car's microphone in the other.

"Everyone lower the windows and put your hands where I can see them." Baker shouldered the gun from behind his opened front door, the barrel resting on the top of the door. With his right hand he clicked the microphone to the loudspeaker system again and

spoke. “At my command, I want you to exit the vehicle one at a time. Mr. Twining, you first, exit the car slowly, keep your hands where I can see them at all times.” Baker had the look of a man who was less afraid of an internal investigation than of letting bad guys escape.

Jim got out of the car. He was shaky and pale as a ghost. He didn’t think his legs would support him.

“Please walk to the back of your vehicle and place yourself facedown on the road.” Baker’s eyes were trying to keep an eye on the passenger behind the tinted windows.

Jim Sees sickly complied. He was prone, facedown, holding his head off the road’s shoulder.

“Clasp your hands behind your head,” Baker said more softly.

Almost as soon as his hands met, he felt the cold metal and heard the firm click of handcuffs. His neck was already tiring, and he let his face sink gently to the pebbly asphalt, which smelled vaguely of oil, gasoline, and the end of the road.

Baker moved across the front of the patrol car to a vantage point on the Mercedes’s passenger door. He held the gun with both hands now. Without the aid of the speaker system, he said loudly, “Man in the front seat, pull your left hand inside of the car and open the door, then show me both hands.”

Mr. Blue was pretty sure he could take out the man with the shotgun. The officer was close enough to take an accurate shot from the short-barreled revolver. The .357’s impact would allow him time for a second shot if the first one didn’t do the job.

Blue opened the door, calculating his next step.

“Don’t do anything rash, Mr. Blue.” Sister Fran’s voice was calm. “We don’t want anything happening to Melanie.”

Blue pushed the gun off his lap and used his heel to kick it under the seat then extended his left hand out the opened door.

"Now step out slowly, turn your back to me, and place your hands behind your back," Baker said. When the vehicle passenger obeyed, he shifted the shotgun to his right hand and drew his automatic pistol. Next he leaned the shotgun against the side of the Mercedes and pulled a set of plastic ready-cuffs from his utility belt.

After both men were in the backseat of the locked cruiser, he went back to the Mercedes and conducted the same set of instructions with Sister Fran. After Baker led her back to the patrol car and squeezed her into the backseat with the two men, he closed the door, made sure the auto lock was engaged, and turned back toward the Mercedes to complete his rescue of the little girl: Melanie was her name according to the Amber Report.

Baker had gone two steps when the little girl emerged from the SUV holding a Hello Kitty pillow in her left hand and something clenched tightly in her right. Her expression seemed one of confusion. Baker noticed the shotgun still leaned against the Mercedes. He didn't really think the odd-looking girl would do anything, but it was cocked and the safety off. Baker had been around guns enough to know that accidents happened.

He took the four strides to reach the shotgun. As he stooped to pick it up, he noticed the little girl raise her arms, not in surrender but in a 'pick me up' gesture.

"I'll get you, honey," Baker said as his hand touched the shotgun's pump handle.

Baker froze. Something niggled him, something that seemed out of place, something peaceful.

Baker held the shotgun by its grip, resting it on his shoulder.

The rusty pine needles formed a soft carpet on the forest floor that kept ground plants to a minimum. The tall, straight pines made the forest magical, columns in a fairy court. Here and there narrow columns of sunlight spotlighted patches of the brown carpet as dust danced in the bright beams that filtered through the tops of the tall trees. It had been a magical place for Randy Baker since he was a child, but now he was a man and men didn't believe in magic.

Baker knew he was a man because not only did he receive his own shotgun a year ago, he was now allowed to go out and hunt alone. His father had told him it was a man's responsibility. He shook off the childish feelings of columns in a magic court and fairies dancing in the light beams. He had business to attend to, responsibilities to shoulder; he needed to find Champ, their best hunting dog.

Champ didn't come home for dinner last night, and was absent still when the family sat down for their breakfast of biscuits, grits, and bacon. Randy's father didn't appear the least worried, but instead of going straight into work, he said he would drive some of the roads and make sure Champ wasn't roadkill. He asked Randy and his two brothers to divide up and search the areas north, east, and south of their farm.

It was midday when Randy reached Cooter Pond in the woods east of his house. He sat down on the soft pine needles by the edge of the pond and watched the tadpoles wiggle their way along the shore, eating whatever tadpoles ate.

He bet his brothers had been back at home for two hours, watching Saturday television and eating leftover biscuits. Randy was the oldest and it was time for him to grow up and pull his weight. He was going to find Champ and make his father proud.

As he moved through the woods, he frequently whistled and called the dog's name, but without reward. He even allowed himself to play Indian scout and examine animal poop he found here and there as he made his way through the forest. Squirrel, deer, and rabbit pellets were in evidence, but no trace of Champ.

An unseen cloud drifted above, and the sun found another window in the pine canopy. A new beam of light shone on the pond a few feet from Randy. He stood up and went to examine the revealed clue: paw prints in the pond's bank. They could be Champ's.

Randy called Champ's name several times, loud and with as much authority as he could muster. No answer. He whistled loudly as he could. No answer. He stood over the paw prints trying to decide what to do. If he headed home now it would be suppertime when he arrived. He didn't want to give up if Champ was close. Maybe Champ wasn't coming because he couldn't. Maybe Champ was hurt.

Randy heard rather than felt a fresh breeze from the north rustling the tops of the trees so far above his head. The patterns of light on the floor shifted as the trees settled, then he felt the breeze again.

Randy heard something in the woods farther to the east. Thinking it was Champ but taking no chances, he moved toward it slowly, shotgun ready.

He heard it again, like something rubbing pine bark.

He came around a large pine and there was Champ. Lying on his side, a sick foam coming out of his mouth with each panting breath.

Before Randy could kneel to take a closer look, Champ was on his feet, crouched, baring teeth, growling like nothing Randy had

ever seen.

Randy decided he was not quite a man yet, and nearly tripped as he half-jumped and walked away from the frightening creature that two days before was their favorite, most-loved pet.

“It’s me Champ,” Randy said, trying to make his voice soothing.

The dog answered by roughly shaking its head, throwing strings of infected foam. It lowered itself in a crouch and took a step forward with a menacing growl.

The better part of valor took command, and though it made no sense, Randy ran for home as fast as he could. He would finish becoming a man tomorrow.

He could hear the dog chasing him with growls and barks. It was gaining on him. Randy had never seen it before, but he knew Champ had rabies. He had heard about it. He had also heard that if he was bit and didn’t receive forty-two shots in his stomach with a nine-inch needle, he would die.

The dog was close now. He could almost feel its gasping breath. He thought maybe some of the flying foam hit his sock.

He didn’t even think about it. He ran and leapt into Cooter Pond. The water near the shore was almost chest deep, and he tried his best to keep his gun dry.

The snarling dog that had been Champ paced left, then right, seeking a way to reach its prey.

Randy stood, chest heaving, trying to think. He had his gun, but the thought of shooting Champ sickened him worse than the fear. A man would shoot the rabid dog, he thought. Then he realized if that is the mark of a man, he would never be one. He could never hurt something he had loved. He started to cry.

By the time the sun went down, Randy was cold, and in the quickly darkening woods he imagined snapping turtles and water moccasins beginning to cruise the pond for fresh meat. Cooter Pond received its name from a three-foot-long snapping turtle his grandfather caught here.

The dog had been lying on its side for some time. Its breath was ragged, and the foam seemed to have thickened and trailed from its mouth like slime.

Soon it would be dark. Randy thought about slowly making his way to the west side of the pond and quietly escaping.

As if reading his mind, the dog jumped up and snarled at him, took a couple of steps, then sniffed and looked beyond Randy.

Randy turned to look behind, half expecting to see some horrific pond monster hulking over him, but instead he saw hope.

In the distance he thought he saw flashlight beams darting. He couldn't hear anything other than the low growls of the dog, which had now moved toward the approaching lights.

He watched for several minutes, making sure the lights were real. They shifted and jostled like someone walking with a flashlight, walking fast and sweeping the lights from side to side as they moved.

Then he heard his name being called. Barely perceptible, it sounded like a tiny angel coming to rescue him.

The dog growled again and took up a position between the boy and the oncoming territorial invaders. It coughed and allowed itself to sit while it waited.

"Dad! Dad! I'm at Cooter Pond. Cooter Pond. Cooter Pond." Randy yelled as loud as he could.

The relief swept over him. "I'm coming, son." His father was

coming to save him. With every passing second the lights came closer, moving faster than before. They jostled but no longer swept in an arc; instead they were focused on the path to the pond.

As Randy's relief settled and he began to realize how cold and tired and hungry he was, a new fear struck him. What would his dad think of him? He had his gun; he could have killed Champ and saved himself. He knew Champ would eventually die from the rabies, and it probably wouldn't be that long. His dad was going to be disappointed.

So as the lights drew closer, he moved closer to the opposite edge, away from the dog.

When Randy's father appeared at the trees surrounding the pond, the dog stood with a whimper then growled. It took a step forward on shaky back legs and snarled.

The shotgun blast was instant, loud, and final. The dog collapsed away from the impact, the top of its head gone from the eyes back.

"You okay, son?" Randy's dad said, holding the light on the boy in the pond.

"I couldn't do it, Dad. I couldn't kill Champ. I'm sorry. I'm sorry." Randy sobbed.

"Of course you couldn't. Champ was a good dog. We loved him and he loved us. You couldn't kill him 'cause he was threatening only you. I had to kill him to protect you. Now get out of that pond and let's go home." Randy's dad was at the edge of the pond, extending his hand to his son.

That had been one of the worst and best days of Randy Baker's life. He never forgot the details of it. He found himself wondering why he was thinking about it. He heard his call sign on the patrol car's radio. He clicked the microphone on his collarbone. "This is

Baker, say again."

"There's a jackknifed chicken truck over near Guntersville Dam. I need you to get over to the north side of the dam road and keep traffic from crossing."

"10-4," Baker said as he looked around. He was parked on the side of the road, his car running. He couldn't remember stopping. He noticed his clipboard and the book he was reading on the floor. He reached down to pick them up and noticed the author's photo. There was really something familiar about that face.

He pulled onto the highway and headed toward the dam.

The next day a review of the patrol car's video revealed seventeen missing minutes. It stopped while the patrol car moved along the highway. After seventeen minutes of static, it started with the car parked on the shoulder as cars drove by.

Baker had no recollection of the missing seventeen minutes. It was as if the video file and his memory had been erased.

The records of Baker's computer search showed a license plate inquiry for a Mercedes SUV belonging to Nathan Twining who resided in Roswell, New Mexico. So far no physical record of Twining had been found, and while the license plate number somehow was in the national database, it appeared to be bogus.

Baker didn't know what to make of the missing time. It was possible he fell asleep. He just didn't know what happened in those seventeen minutes.

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There was a grasshopper on the rolled-up window. Jim Sees sat in the patrol car's backseat, hands bound behind his back. Mr. Blue was to his immediate left and Sister Fran beyond him. The Alabama Highway Patrolman was walking back toward the Mercedes.

Jim wondered if everything inside the car was being recorded, then realized it didn't make any difference. They were busted, Leavenworth bound—if they were lucky.

Mr. Blue was fidgeting, bumping into Jim. Sister Fran was doing what she had been told, praying.

Jim saw Sergeant Baker pause as Melanie exited the car, the ever-present pillow in her hand. Baker took four more steps and reached for his shotgun, which leaned against the car. Melanie raised her arms in an invitation to be picked up.

Then the world became very still, soundless. At first everything seemed frozen, the grasshopper suspended in mid leap two inches off the window. Baker became a contemporary statue stooping to pick up the shotgun. Only Melanie retained mobility as she walked toward the officer, arms in the air.

Then the world changed. Something shifted. The grasshopper became a flash of light of every spectrum. It did not explode and create the light; it became the light. Faster than a flashbulb, everything returned to normal. The grasshopper was flying toward the roadside grass and Baker was moving again, but he was turning back toward the cruiser, shotgun over his shoulder. When he reached the front passenger door, he stopped and looked around, then called out, "Champ! Come Champ! Here boy!"

Sergeant Baker used his key to unlock the cruiser's doors. He opened the front door and returned the shotgun to its rack. He next backed out of the car and opened the back door. Baker stepped back and motioned Jim to exit the car, then to turn around.

When Jim complied he felt his handcuffs being unlocked. Baker patted him on the shoulder and motioned him toward the Mercedes. Jim walked a few paces in that direction then turned to see what happened next.

When Baker had Mr. Blue outside the car, he removed a pocket knife from his belt and cut the nylon strap. Mr. Blue's amazed face stared at Jim. When Baker patted him on the back and sent him to the Mercedes, Mr. Blue grinned, shrugged and winked at Jim. Mr. Blue, not one to allow an opportunity to slip by, moved toward the Mercedes's driver's door.

Jim remained as Sister Fran slid across the seat and was freed. Baker then closed the passenger side doors, walked around Jim on his way to the driver's door, climbed in, placed his hands on the steering wheel in the ten and two positions, and proceeded to sit motionless, staring at nothing.

By the time Jim turned around, Blue had the car started. He climbed into the front passenger seat and sat speechless as the Mercedes accelerated onto the highway.

After a full three minutes of dead silence in the car, Jim turned to look at Sister Fran and asked, "What the hell was that?"

The nun gave him a coy smile and replied, "Why Mr.Braveheart, don't you believe in miracles?"

Jim searched her smiling eyes and said, "I do now."

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN: Charles Winston Merit

There is a saying, “Choose your friends carefully.” The things I learned as a scribe creating executive summaries demonstrate how the people who run governments allow, often encourage, horrors among people—often even their own. The lack of interest in doing the right thing, and lack of compassion among the megalomaniacs behind government action or inaction, convinced my subconscious to exit the grid long before the idea manifested in my consciousness. By the time I fully understood what had to be done, I realized that some dark, secret part of my mind had been planning how best to provide my personal safety while removing the cloak from the worst sins of the world’s ever-changing cast of egomaniac power brokers.

To apply leverage against megalomaniacs requires others of the same ilk who disagree with those in power. Volatility, expedience, and danger underlie the core qualities that make this type driven, charming, savvy, and cunning. In short, to befriend these people without a point of reference in their future plans is futile—unless you offer them something they can’t refuse.

So, several years before skedaddling out of Washington, the land of pork and schemes, I did what I am good at: researched the richest and most powerful people in the country who did not agree with the direction the country was taking. No matter which direction the government took, there are always powerful people who feel disenfranchised, cheated, or lied to.

Enter one of the most famous ‘bootstrap’ billionaires of the twentieth century, Charles Merit. There is no doubt he made himself a millionaire on his own, but his billions had a helping hand—from an unknown civil servant: me, Jim Tate.

Charles Merit had grown up poor. Not lower-middle class: dirt poor. His father owned a four-hundred-acre farm in northern Alabama seven dirt-road miles off Highway 90 near Piedmont, Alabama. Charles was barefoot until he started school. He wore hand-me-down shoes and everything else until he graduated from high school and met an Army recruiter in Gadsden.

Charles thought the US Army wonderful compared to life working the family farm. They slept late and didn't do any work before breakfast. The army had great food—all the time—and he could eat as much as he wanted, including meat. At first they went to school to learn army things, like finding your way with a compass or by stars at night, or how to shoot. He already knew most of it just from growing up in the country. They walked a fair amount, but not much more than he did going back and forth to the school building near Piedmont. He completed basic infantry training as Highly Qualified, which gave him a leg-up when it came time to become a private first class. He stayed at Ft. Benning, Georgia for another six weeks and completed Advanced Infantry Combat Training and won his private first class stripes along with every other guy in the unit.

He was better friends with everyone in his squad then he had been with anyone back home.

Flying Tiger Airlines was a commercial cargo aviation company that was rooted back in the original Flying Tigers in World War II. About the time the number of troops travelling between the US and Vietnam massively increased, a huge block of shares was purchased by an unknown investment group. Those who wanted more trouble than most could handle could follow the stock ownership as it wound from one shell company to another in places like the Isle of Mann, Zurich, Hong Kong, and Nassau. Eventually the trail stopped at the door of Lucy and Linda

Johnson, the US president's daughters. Fortunately, both the risk the Johnson sisters took in buying such a large stake in it, and the risk Flying Tigers took by purchasing new Boeing 707s, paid off as they became the US government's airline of choice to shuttle thousands of our soldiers back and forth every day.

Charles Merit knew none of this when his platoon boarded The Flying Tiger 707 at Sea-Tac airport. It refueled in Japan and emptied the newly trained soldiers onto the frantic-paced activity of cargo, ammunitions, and soldiers (alive and dead) on the airstrip at Da Nang on the coast of the Quang Nam Province. From there his platoon was trucked to Hue and then deployed into the jungles. For thirteen months Charles Merit fought the heat, bugs, snakes, diseases, monsoons, and finally the official enemy, the North Vietnamese soldiers. Truth be told, his platoon rarely engaged troops actually from North Vietnam: the ones they chased, were chased by, attacked, and were attacked by were the Viet Cong, Victor Charles. The VC was a hybrid force of volunteers and forced levies from South Vietnam commanded by NCOs and officers from the North Vietnam regulars. Whatever they were, they were enough for Charles Merit. When his tour of duty ended, he sat in the back of the Flying Tiger 707, which was remarkably silent compared to his flight over. He spent the time remembering each of the thirty-three dead or wounded comrades from his platoon, his best friends.

He finished his enlistment washing officer's cars at Ft. Hood, and returned to visit his parents for the first time since he joined up.

Arriving home, he instantly recognized his home and family for what they were. Good people, but resolved to a life of burden and poverty. They were not the least upset they had lived on this small farm for four generations without—other than electricity and

indoor plumbing—any significant improvements. They still worked from dawn to dusk laboring to afford themselves necessities like canned vegetables, repaired clothing, and chopped and hauled wood for heat and cooking.

Charles realized the army and Vietnam had changed all this for him. Had he never left, he might have remained like them: ignorant but content with their lot. But he was changed, and even if he was the only one in his family to rise from this trap of poverty, he would do what he could to bring the rest of them out of this hole.

The GI Bill paid for Charles to earn his degree in electrical engineering. He knew two people who owned electrical contract firms, and they were both, by his standards, rich. After graduation he joined a firm outside of Birmingham, but soon was at odds with the owners, who didn't like a freshly graduated student telling them how to improve their quality. They had secretly abandoned the idea of quality ten years after becoming successful. They were in the business for money. Quality cost money, so the bottom line was: college kid was right and made them remember their own lofty dreams, which was a bad thing because now they were hooked on money. College kid had to go.

Charles found a job with the state as an assistant electrical inspector for state-funded projects. He travelled all over Alabama. It was during this seven-year period that he discovered his passion: metal detectors.

He had stopped at a rest area on Highway 72 near Russell Cave close to where Alabama, Georgia, and Tennessee meet. A man and his teenage son walked through a field behind the rest area holding metal detectors similar to what he'd seen used in Vietnam to detect mines.

Charles watched them longer than he intended. Curious, he

walked out and hailed them. When close enough, the father said hello, and the conversation began.

The father-son team used metal detectors they made from kits to search for objects just beneath the soil. During the Civil War, elements of both Union and Confederate armies had passed through this area numerous times, and by doing detailed research, the pair of historical prospectors believed the immediate area had been the scene of at least two minor skirmishes in the 1860s.

Charles walked along with the father and listened to tales of cannon balls, Minié balls, belt buckles, and uniform buttons found during previous outings. After a while the son was ready to stop for the day, so the father handed Charles his metal detector and a hand trowel, showed him how to use it, and sent him searching on his own for a half hour.

Fifteen minutes into it, the detector yowled, beeped, and whistled. After two passes over an area, Charles set the awkward machine down and began to gently dig with a trowel. In short order he unearthed the remains of an officer's sword from the Civil War. The blade was broken six inches above the guard, and it was about as rusty and pitted as any metal Charles had ever seen, but it was somehow beautiful to Merit and he was hooked.

He worked for the state by day, and by night he studied local history, and designed and built metal detectors in his garage. On weekends, or if he were travelling overnight, he would head out to some place he'd discovered in books or articles. His reward was a quickly growing collection of historical, metal junk. His garage was filling up with boxes on shelves that held the ruins of hairbrushes, buckles, plows, hatpins, buttons, pieces of Civil War weapons, jars with tin tops: pretty much anything that could be associated with metal that was used between 1800 and 1950. His pride and joy was a tommy gun, a .45-caliber submachine gun

favored by gangsters during the Roaring 20s through the Great Depression.

Early on in his hobby, Charles began meeting men with similar interest walking the same fields. They were usually friendly and willing to talk late in the day when they were walked-out and it grew too dark to scan the ground. He enjoyed the conversations and sharing places new to each other.

Charles met up with an older gentleman from Ohio named Daniel Parker. Retired and widowed, hunting for relics had become his whole life. Parker had actually written a book about it, and was the editor of a self-published, quarterly magazine cleverly named Metal Detectives.

They became friends and wrote letters back and forth a couple of times a month. Charles started writing articles about how to build better metal detectors, and had the idea to advertise his design in the magazine and build to order.

Pretty soon he was building two or three detectors a month and selling them for $250.00 each. Merit had advanced the state of the equipment by adding a discriminator dial that theoretically allowed the operator to dial out lighter metals and avoid digging up worthless bottle and jar tops.

Three years into making detectors in his spare bedroom, two things happened that changed the course of his life. Had it not been for these things, he may never have become Charles Merit, billionaire.

Though still selling only eight to ten detectors each month, Charles knew of an appliance-repair shop for sale and thought he could build his hobby into a thriving business. His wife nearly left him with their two-year-old daughter when he quit his job and rented the lawnmower-repair shop. He convinced her to stay. He

was so convincing she became pregnant with their second child that night.

Charles knew it would be rough at first, but between making and selling detectors and making simple repairs to televisions, radios, toasters, irons, and vacuum cleaners, he could make a go of it.

The purchase of the repair business came with what goodwill could be garnered from the sparse population of Piedmont, Alabama. It also, he learned, came with a sub-distributorship, if he wanted to keep it, for comic books. Those superheroes needed help to reach Rexall Drugs, Winn-Dixie groceries, and other local retailers. Why not? thought Merit, hedging his bets to provide a thriving business for his family.

Things took an unexpected direction. The limited circulation of Metal Detectives magazine capped Merit's metal-detector business at nine to twelve units a month. He was not able to find another, similar magazine to allow him to build his market. It turned out Charles hated repairing appliances. But he did pretty well selling comic books.

Two years into his diverging businesses, Merit hired a young man to build metal detectors and run the repair shop. He had expanded the comic-book business enough to add the extra salary.

Merit focused his fine engineering mind on expanding his comic-book business and territory. The aging distributor who provided Merit comic books wanted to meet, and that is how Merit ceased to be a sub-distributor and became a distributor with a warehouse in Huntsville.

One Saturday he came into the repair shop to check with the young man he had hired to run it for him. He found fifteen kids ranging in age from 12 to 20 sitting at card tables playing a game

with a strange-looking deck of cards. Before he could throw them out, Jim emerged from the back work area holding a greasy lawnmower blade and explaining two of the kids were his little brothers and he let them bring their friends to play a card game called Magic: the Gathering on Saturdays. Merit didn't think he liked the responsibility, no, not just responsibility, the liability of having kids on the premises.

While he was thinking about the best way to run the kids out of the store without pissing off their moms, who brought in the toasters, waffle irons, and hair curlers for repairs, he overheard two kids talking. The younger wanted a ride into Gadsden so he could buy some more Magic cards and try to buy some kind of special card called a Black Lotus.

As he listened to these kids excitedly chattering away about having to drive forty miles to buy more cards to add to their collection, he had an epiphany: these were the same kids who bought comic books. They were paying eight dollars for a box of Magic cards, and $3.99 for a foil-packed set of cards they called a booster pack. Finally, whoever invented this game was either lucky or a genius. The kids had to keep adding hard-to-find cards to their decks to stay in the winning column, and it was addictive.

In a burst of inspiration, Merit said he would take as many as would fit in his SUV to Gadsden. On the way down and back, the six kids were delighted to tell him more than he wanted to know about this new collectible card game. It seemed they knew all about it.

They directed him to a store in a rundown strip center called The Dragon's Lair. It was a dingy, small store that sold games and sports collectibles. The owner was a short, round, middle-aged man with a too-thin mustache in a stretched-too-tight, grayed-out

T-shirt that advertised a game called Dungeons & Dragons. His name was Howard.

Howard was as free with information as the kids. Merit left the store knowing everything he needed to start distributing this game if he wanted. The kids left, by Merit's calculation, close to three hundred dollars behind in the store. Merit decided in that second that he wanted a piece of this.

Two Saturdays later, twenty kids showed up at the repair shop to play their games and found an eight-foot metal rack of comic books, and a glass case displaying recently released new editions of Magic: the Gathering boxed sets and booster packs. The kids stayed until the shop closed at six that evening. They left thrilled that the nice Mr. Merit allowed them a place to play and buy comics and Magic cards. What a nice man he was.

Merit counted over $500 from the kids' purchases for that day. He drove home imaging how much money he could make distributing this product with his comics.

The next week he took orders. At first it was slow, as none of his merchants had heard of the phenomenon, but every time a store tried it they sold out and ordered more. A month later, all of his accounts were buying the cards from him. A month after that the cards were selling as well as comic books everywhere.

Charles was on a weekly trip to check up on his warehouse in Huntsville. Before long he would need to expand. While in Walmart buying office supplies and printer paper, he checked out their comic-book section. It was a mess. It and the sports collectible trading cards that were next to the comic-book section had been rifled through and sold down until there wasn't enough there to make it worth searching. In fact, it didn't even look like a section at all.

Two weeks later the lightbulb went off in Merit's head, and he turned around and drove back to the Walmart in Huntsville.

He spoke with the manager for ten minutes trying to learn how he might approach Walmart with his idea. The manager was busy and of little help at the moment, but gave Merit his card and told him he could call. Working with the store manager, they set up a test where Merit Distributors stocked and maintained the comic book and collectible trading card section. After three months the store's sales had skyrocketed. The manager sent the test plan and results to Bentonville and was told to conduct a regional test using seventeen Walmart stores in the areas around Huntsville and Birmingham and report the results after six months.

The total sales of comic books and trading cards at Walmart represented less than a tenth of one percent of the chain's sales. The category shone in dollars generated per cubic foot of shelf space, but the volume wasn't there to make it a major initiative for the retail giant. The fact that is was so small a portion of Walmart's business and no one at corporate really cared about it so long as it made money allowed Merit to succeed.

After the six-month test, there was another test in three hundred stores. After that the program went nationwide and this insignificant, miniscule wedge of the Walmart pie chart under the 'other' label made Merit a millionaire many times over.

His new two-hundred-thousand-square-foot warehouse in Huntsville became the hub of ten national distribution centers, each with its own team of store checkers who were paid commission to stock, check, and restock Walmart stores with comic books, baseball and football cards, and, of course, Magic: the Gathering.

By now his wife and two children had moved out. She left him for a man she said was more attentive and concerned with her

needs above the coarse demands of business. She said business like it was a dirty word. Of course, she and her man friend did not marry after she divorced Merit, so she lived in a big house on some islands off South Carolina in a gated community and was neighbors with Barbara Streisand. Another ‘of course’ was that Charles paid for the house as well as a huge amount of monthly child support.

But Merit, deep down, really didn’t care. He worked his employees like dogs. Driving, driving, never relenting, always expecting and demanding more. He built commission incentives so that the better an employee did at a store in one month, it was in the employee’s best financial interest to sell more the next month. Always more, never retreat.

Merit hired a CEO, a COO, and a CFO. Between the three of them he paid almost one and a half million dollars in annual salary. There were only three rules for them to follow: increase sales, increase profits, and don’t piss off Walmart. It was made clear any infraction resulted in the loss of employment with Merit Distributors.

Merit found himself returning to his love. He spent more and more time leisurely strolling fields with his ever-improving metal detectors. Sometimes those fields were in Europe or Australia or South America. While metal detectors still weren’t a staple in American households, Merit was determined to make and sell his brand.

One fall Merit got a wild hair up his ass to go search a Civil War battlefield known as the Wilderness in northern Virginia. He jumped in his new Ford pickup truck, ramped on to Interstate 20 East, and imagined the century-old treasures he would find in the thick woods that had been fertilized by the blood of 20,000 soldiers a hundred years ago. The idea to go to the place came

from a Civil War buff that lived in Virginia. They had met at a Civil War memorabilia convention some months before. Merit had a booth showing some of his treasures, but his prices, like most of the others there, were too high. He went to meet other metal detectives and swap tales of rusty treasures.

My research had led me to Merit, among others. He already had enough wealth to be of use if I could win him over.

I traveled to the memorabilia convention and, feigning interest in his hobby, stood looking at collection of rusty objects. After a while he looked up from the convention program, looked at my name badge, and said, "Can I help you, Mr. Tate?"

"I hope so," I responded, and leaned forward so he could see me studying his badge, "Mr. Merit. I've been interested in learning about the hobby for a few months now, and a friend told me this is a great place to meet people who know it inside out."

Merit's face seemed to lose interest as he said, "It's great fun. If you don't already have a metal detector, I can sell you one of those. They are the best." He pointed to a stack of six, long narrow boxes stacked on the end of his table.

"Merit, Merit," I said, then acted surprised. "You must be Charles Merit. I've read your articles in Metal Detectives. You are the one that got me interested in this in the first place."

Merit beamed.

"Yes, yes," I acted excited. "Of course I will buy one! I understand yours are the best. Handmade."

He pulled a box on the stack and leaned it against the back side of the tabletop while he opened a manual receipt book.

"You lucked out," Merit said as he pressed a ballpoint pen too hard against the paper and carbon in the receipt book. "Brand-new model. This baby can be tuned to pick up specific types of metals.

You are going to love it."

"This is so cool," I said. "I thought I was going to have to order one by mail." I pulled out my checkbook. "How much?" I asked.

I got Merit to promise to show me how to work his detector before dinner. We spent thirty minutes while Merit proudly demonstrated his device's abilities. About halfway through, I mentioned that I did research for the Federal Parks Service and had access to all sorts of maps and information about historical battles, routes of march, and campsites for armies during America's wars on our soil.

Before dinner he bought me a drink. Merit was particularly interested in where armies set up camps. Finding battlefields was not difficult, and if you went to one on a bad day you might find an army of men with detectors prowling the ground.

Merit insisted on taking me to dinner, and proceeded to pump me to see what kind of information he might have gained access to. By the end of the convention, I had a new friend for life. It is easy to make friends if the other person thinks you have something they want but can't find themselves.

Before Merit came to visit the area that had been part of the Wilderness Campaign in 1865, I spent a weekend with a friend of a friend who taught history at Virginia Military Institute in Lexington, Virginia. As a favor to his friend, he took me into the bowels of VMI's archives and showed me where I might go to have a good chance of finding artifacts.

A week later, Merit and I worked our way through thickets, shrubs, and briars, trying to make room to operate metal detectors. In short order the excitement of beeps and buzzes began to show us where to dig, and we found more bounty in a few hours than Merit had ever imagined could be in one place.

After two more shared field trips we became fast friends, but my job took me out of the country, so it was going to be a while before we could hover our metal hoops over hard dirt again. Thank God.

Merit and I corresponded two or three times a year and stayed connected. Then, a few weeks after the World Trade Center towers were brought down by planes carrying hijackers who believed that a merciful God wanted them to kill several thousand innocent people, I called Merit.

We chatted for a few minutes about the good old days. Finally I told Merit the reason I called and asked if he could come to Washington, DC as soon as possible. I waited for him to break the long silence on the phone.

"You sure about this?" he asked.

I could almost see his brows furrowed and his head tilted as he listened for any hint of fallacy. "I'm positive," I said, then added, "we can work out the details when you are here."

It was a short conversation, but interesting and urgent enough that Merit grabbed a flight out of Atlanta the next day and met Jim in Georgetown for dinner that night.

Jim brought a friend, the soon-to-be-retired General Conway. Conway had spent the last ten years of his career heading up a military physical-security unit that examined ways to provide security for bases. Conway had an idea. The idea had been carefully fed to him by Jim Tate so that it would seem to originate in the general's mind.

By the end of that evening, a handshake confirmed the start of a new company. Merit was going to muster his assets and answer his country's call to secure it from terrorists. Conway was going to provide Merit's company the connections and inside information

to sell the US government.

Next time you go through an airport security area, take a moment and read the name on almost all the equipment used to detect contraband. Eight out of ten times, no matter where you are in the Western world, the name on the equipment is Merit Electronics.

What did I receive in appreciation? Charles Merit owes me a huge favor. That and a small finder's fee, a tiny fraction of a percent royalty in a Swiss bank account that over the years has grown into several million dollars, which allows me the ability to do the things that need to be done.

CHAPTER NINETEEN: Huntsville, Alabama

Before they circled the gas station a second time, they saw the Suburban and fell in line behind it. In less than a mile they pulled into a large warehouse complex's loading docks. A white-haired, red-faced man with bushy eyebrows left the Suburban, shot them a quick glance and waved then went to a security keypad and entered a code. A ground-level loading-dock door rose. The man reentered the Suburban and drove inside.

Mr. Blue followed.

The warehouse, which Jim thought might be close to half a million square feet, was nearly empty.

The blustery-faced man turned on a bank of overhead lights and walked over to the Mercedes's driver's door. As Mr. Blue exited, the white-haired man held out his hand in greeting. Blue took it without a word.

The man smiled as he exchanged greetings with Sister Fran and Melanie.

When he and Jim shook hands, their eyes locked, and Jim thought there was something familiar about the man.

"Well, you all must be very tired," White Hair said. "We have an hour before we leave here. Follow me and I'll take you to the showers where you can get cleaned up and refreshed."

He disappeared through a set of double, swinging doors and the rest followed.

The showers were of the industrial type for warehouse workers. Jim Sees and Mr. Blue showered without speaking. In the locker room, stacked on benches, were new clothes: camouflaged jumpsuits of the deer-hunter variety, and packages of new

underwear and socks.

“Nice,” Mr. Blue said reading the size label in the jumpsuit in one of the stacks.

“A little too close to prison, if you ask me,” Jim said, eyeing the clothing.

Jim finished dressing first and went out of the men’s locker room then back through the double doors.

White Hair extended an unopened bottle of ice-cold water, saying, “Sorry, I was so excited I forgot to offer this to you before. I have some soft drinks if you would rather.”

Jim nodded and said, “Thanks, this is great.” Jim could not help noticing how familiar White Hair looked. He couldn’t help himself. “I think I’ve seen you before. I just can’t...”

White Hair went from cordial to all business in an instant. “Better not go there, son. Maybe when this is all over we can belly up to a bar somewhere and give each other knowing winks about how we pulled the wool over the government’s eyes and fucked it up the ass. For now, the less we know….”

“The better.” Jim cut him off by taking a long drink, the icy water cleansing and refreshing his throat. “Are we waiting on a call from Mr. Big?” Jim asked, emphasizing the last two words.

“Yes… we are waiting on a call, but not from whoever you think Mr. Big is.” White Hair gave Jim a slightly disapproving look.

Jim thought White Hair did not look like the kind of guy he wanted disapproving of him, so he thought it best for him to shut up so long as his anxiety and fear were showing in his speech.

Mr. Blue came through the doors and was handed a bottle of water. A few minutes later the girls came out wearing their own

jumpsuits.

No one wanted to talk. Each person was lost in his or her own wonderings and fears. Just as it was becoming obviously uncomfortable, a phone rang.

White Hair pulled it from his shirt pocket and said, "Ready?" He paused for a second, then said, "Be there in ten minutes."

He turned to the others and motioned toward his Suburban. "If you will, we have to be somewhere soon."

They loaded up in the car and pulled out of the door. Once the door was down and locked, White Hair drove the big vehicle deftly as a sports car.

Jim watched from the backseat, trying to remember street names so he could find his way back to the Mercedes if he needed. After a few minutes they turned left and drove into the Madison County Executive Airport. White Hair drove up to a guardhouse next to a twelve-foot-wide gate in a sturdy, steel fence. He lowered the window and winked at the guard, who pressed a button and the gate began to retract along the fence.

White Hair passed through and stopped the car twenty yards away from a Falcon 900 private jet.

"Here we are, ladies and gentlemen. Let's go," White Hair said, exiting the car and beginning a conversation with a pilot who had come to the car.

Jim Sees wasn't sure of anything anymore. His visions of doom and imprisonment for life in a mudhole in Guantanamo Bay had eroded any confidence he had about this misadventure. He didn't know much about the Falcon 900 other than it was built by a French company and could cruise at nearly six hundred miles per hour for four or five thousand miles without refueling. This one had two additional fuel pods tucked under its wings that could add

a couple of thousand more miles. If he stepped on that plane, he could be anywhere when it landed.

"I'm not going," Jim said flatly. "This is it for me. I did not sign on to become an international fugitive."

White Hair gave him that disapproving look again, only this time without the courtesy of reservation. He told the pilot to prepare the plane for takeoff immediately and turned back to Jim. "If you stay here, son, there's a good chance you will be arrested and spend the rest of your life in federal prison for some trumped-up crime you didn't commit. Your jailers will be instructed to make sure your charming fellow inmates will take turns fucking you up the ass until you bleed to death."

White Hair stared steadily at Jim. Seeing he was making no headway, he went on. "I'm not a patient man. You've seen only my good side. I have my instructions and I'm going to make sure they are followed. Do you understand?"

Jim unconsciously took a half step back. It pissed him off to be spoken to this way. Then suddenly, like a flash from the blue, something about White Hair's angry, threatening expression triggered his memory and he knew who White Hair was. He started to say his name, then thought better of it. Instead he said, in as cool a voice as he could muster, "I appreciate your candor, but I am not getting on that plane."

White Hair seemed to swell up, his face glowing bright red, anger seething.

Mr. Blue said, "Now everyone just calm down a moment," as he walked casually over to Jim.

He leaned close to Jim and said very softly, "Mr.Braveheart, I understand your concern. I've even had some of the same thoughts and doubts you have, but there is no turning back from

this until it is finished."

Jim kept his eyes on White Hair, who now had a hand in his jacket pocket, fingering a gun no doubt. "Mr. Blue," Jim spoke as softly as he had been spoken too, "we don't know where this plane is going, and once we are on it we lose all control. I'm not going."

Mr. Blue touched his elbow, almost gently and whispered, "I don't know you and you don't know me. You've been okay so far and I don't want to give you a reason not to like me, but you can either get on that plane on your own, right now, or you will wake up on that plane and hate me for the rest of your life. It's your choice."

Jim looked in the bigger man's eyes. There was no malice, no enjoyment, only resolve.

"Okay," Jim said, and started toward the plane.

Inside he took the seat closest to the door and cockpit. The others filed past him, including White Hair himself.

The copilot closed and sealed the door and took his seat as the plane began accelerating down the five-thousand-foot runway. In no time, they were airborne and the plane was climbing fast.

When the plane leveled out, the copilot reappeared and showed them the bathroom and the galley with a small refrigerator stocked with drinks, snacks, and sandwiches. He then explained how to use the video screens and keyboards that popped up from the chairs' arms.

After the copilot returned to the cockpit, White Hair rose and went to the galley area and stood only a few inches from Jim.

"Well, get cozy everyone. Next stop, Columbia. That's about seven or eight hours of togetherness." He glanced at Jim as he continued, "Our 'travel advisor' has provided travelling documents and cash for each of us, which will be distributed before we leave

the plane. So sit back and enjoy the flight."

White Hair leaned down and said to Jim, "I am glad you came."

A very unhappy Jim raised his eyes in defiance of one of America's richest and most ruthless men. He wondered what 1947-07 had done to enlist the help of Charles Merit, a.k.a., Mr. White Hair.

CHAPTER TWENTY

There is a neurological condition with a broad range of symptoms, ranging from minimal levels allowing near-normal functionality to those who are essentially mental cripples, unable to function in society. The falling dominoes spelled autism.

It is first seen in children around two or three-years old. It is quite possible for a two year old to speak beautifully then, over the next four months, lose it all. The child may be left unable to learn, think, communicate, and interact with other humans.

Those on the lower end of the syndrome do not suffer to this extent, but live with various degrees of learning disabilities. The worst cases sink into an abyss of disability, unable to speak or function, and trapped in repetitive, seemingly pointless movements.

Autism was identified in the 1940s. Early studies indicated it was a rare disorder among children. Studies conducted between 1947 and 1950 estimated that 1:10,000 suffered from autism. These cases probably included only extremes.

During the 1960s and 1970s, additional studies held steady at about 2:10,000 of the population, up a little from 1950, but not drastically. The occurrence of autism appeared to be on a slight upward trend, but no one showed concern until 2007.

The CDC began broad-based studies of autism in 1996 and found that about 7:10,000 people were autistic (still less than one per thousand). Between 1996 and 2007, the number grew from .07 to 5.5 per thousand—in other words, in 1996 less than one child per 1000 had autism. By 2007 one out of 185 was autistic. Between 2007 and 2010 the number rose to 1 person out of every 150.

So how did we go from 1:10,000 in 1950 to 1:150 today?

In 1990, the new Individuals with Disabilities Act added autistic children to its list of people served under the educational provisions of the law. This alone is enough to create a huge swell in the number of kids diagnosed and receiving benefits in the form of special schooling. Additionally, the symptoms included in autism expanded, including many people before who were otherwise classified as disabled.

Another theory that sent parents running to attorneys was that the MMR (Measles, Mumps, and Rubella) vaccination caused autism. The study that 'proved' this turned out to be impossible to duplicate, which in the scientific world usually spells s-c-a-m. Which it was. A prominent researcher in the UK, David Wakefield, perpetrated the fraud to maintain and increase grant money from the UK National Legal Fund administered by Richard Barr, a prominent class-action-suit specialist. The test subjects were eventually revealed to be children of Barr's clients between the ages of 2 and 9 years old, some of which did not even have autism. The plan was to reap billions from the companies that manufactured the vaccine.

The CDC put all their numbers in their giant computer and came to the following conclusions:

The changes to the Americans with Disabilities Act in 1990 increased the number of cases.

The high level of awareness about autism today compared to before 1990 stimulates more parents to have their children examined for autism.

Broadening the symptoms placed under the autism umbrellas, which allowed people who before were diagnosed with mental retardation, Asperger's, and other syndromes to be included in the

autistic spectrum increased counts.

Accounting for all of the above, the CDC concluded the autism epidemic is real. The total new cases represented by the reasons above might, if given the most liberal translation, account for 30 percent of the increase. The other 70 percent of the increase remains a complete mystery. Well, not a mystery to the people who keep it covered.

The Roswell illuminati know the increase in autism is directly related to the number of abductions. Today the increase in autism will continue even without increasing the number of abductions. The HCU has achieved critical mass. Enough peas are planted.

So, what causes autism? More importantly, why would anyone want to increase the population of a planet with people who could not function in society?

What causes autism? No one really knows. The brain is the most complicated thing so far encountered. We are only now obtaining a basic understanding of how it functions. There are solid theories about what creates an autistic brain and how the HCU can poke around and increase the frequency, so let's address what we know.

Mild to severe autistics generally possess some or all of the following conditions:

Repetitive movement such as hand flapping, making sounds, head rolling, or body rocking.

Compulsive behavior is intended and appears to follow rules, such as arranging objects in stacks or lines.

Sameness, which means resistance to change: for example, insisting that the furniture not be moved, or refusing to be interrupted.

Ritualistic behavior involves an unvarying pattern of daily

activities, such as an unchanging menu or a dressing ritual. This is closely associated with sameness, and an independent validation has suggested combining the two factors.

Restricted behavior that is limited in focus, interest, or activity, such as preoccupation with a single television program, toy, or game.

Self-injury includes movements that injure or can injure the person, such as eye poking, skin picking, hand biting, and head banging. A 2007 study reported that self-injury at some point affected about 30 percent of children with ASD.

No single repetitive behavior seems to be specific to autism, but only autism appears to have an elevated pattern of occurrence and severity of these behaviors.

Autistics are simply wired differently. Their brains are physically different from those of the general population.

What we don't know about autism will eventually fill many books. What we do know about the autistic brain is:

At a certain point in post-natal development, autistic brains are larger.

Testosterone is linked to autism.

Certain portions of the brain, such as the amygdala, may be enlarged in autistic brains.

Certain parts of the brain may function differently in autistic people.

"Mini-columns" (small structures within the cortex) in the brain may be formed differently and be more numerous in autistic brains. (This results in autistic brains having less ability to block sensory input.)

The entire brain may function differently in autistic people.

Some autistic brains show clear signs of inflammation, suggesting the disease is associated with activation of the immune system. These findings reinforce the idea that immune response in the brain is involved in autism. It is not clear if the inflammation is a consequence of disease, or a cause of it, or both.

In many autistic people, the brain develops too quickly beginning at about 12 months. By age ten, their brains as a whole are at a normal size, but "wired" atypically.

While people with autism are handicapped in social and communication skills because of the brain's different wiring, they are likely to have other enhanced abilities. One such example is an ability to use visual stimulation and the right side of the brain to compensate for verbal skills. For example, autistic kids generally find "Waldo" much faster than control children. Often, as the test progresses, the control children are unable to find "Waldo" at all while the autistics continue to locate the cartoon character.

The evidence in the 1970s and 80s indicated genetics had little to do with autism. Between then and now something changed—drastically. Between 10-15 percent of autism cases now have an identifiable Mendelian (single-gene) condition, chromosome abnormality, or is associated with numerous genetic disorders.

So, back to the question: why would aliens annually abduct tens of thousands of people (in the US alone—probably hundreds of thousands worldwide) with the goal of engineering the births of autistic children?

They aren't. That would be silly, unless they could receive something of value from the autistic population. So what could be mined from a planet full of autistic people?

We already know autistic brains are wired differently. We also know specific areas of the brain are enlarged and more active than

normal brain counterparts. Their ability to block input (sights, sounds, odors, etc.) is diminished. We also know the oversized areas of the autistic brain function faster than their counterparts in the normal brain. If brains were made by HP, the normal brain would have a 2.10 gigahertz processor and the autistic brain would have a 3.76 processor.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

Can you spell savant?

Savants' brains have superpowers. The powers differ from one to the next but they almost always involve one or more of the following:

- Photographic memory
- Counting
- Match
- Repetition of pattern
- Total Recall
- Perfect Pitch
- Exactness of memories
- See all details but often not the whole (facial recognition)

All of these people are extraordinarily special. They are also extremely rare. Below is a list of the top 10.

- Kim Peek
- Leslie Lemke
- Alonzo Clemons
- Gottfried Mind
- Gilles Tréhin
- Jedediah Buxton
- Orlando Serrell

- Stephen Wiltshire
- Ellen Boudreaux
- Daniel Tammet

These are the most famous in a current world population of approximately 50 gifted savants.

Kim Peek died in 2010. He was the inspiration for the character Raymond in the movie Rainman.

Orlando Serrell is interesting because he was not born a savant. He was hit in the head while playing baseball.

Probably the most interesting is Daniel Tammet. So far, he is the only savant with the cognitive ability to tell us what he sees in his mind and how he does his amazing mental feats. For example: he became famous by carrying out Pi to 22,514 decimal places—in his head. He also decided to learn to speak Icelandic, a terribly difficult language. He moved to a cabin in Iceland. Three weeks later he was fluent.

US intelligence agencies spent years trying to learn how to create and use savants. Imagine a person who is able to glimpse a room for five seconds then later recall and draw every detail down to the specific books on the shelves.

Or someone like Kim Peek who read a book's left page with his left eye and the other page with his right. Every five seconds, he turned the page and read the next two pages. That's a hundred pages in about four minutes. Kim could recite word-for-word what he read with 98 percent accuracy. During his life he read more than 10,000 books, and could recall the words of all of them. He could not button his shirt, tie his shoes, or tell you what any of the words he read meant, but he was the world's greatest human database.

After the Korean War, the US began experimenting with various forms of mind-control using US military personnel. It sounds cruel, but the same people who called this shot also stationed thousands of GIs in trenches and foxholes a mile or two from ground zero at test sites and told them not to look at the flash when the nuclear device exploded. (How many of those guys died from related diseases?)

We knew the bomb was bad for people. We had only inconvenient suspicions that dozens of mind-altering hallucinogens, shock treatments, chemically induced hypnosis, and various forms of deprivation would really harm someone.

The 1947 medical trials at Nuremberg made it clear to the world that experimentation with unknowing human subjects is morally and legally unacceptable. The United States Military Tribunal established the Nuremberg Code as a standard against which to judge German scientists who experimented with human subjects.

As the trials proceeded and we understood the true horror of what these Nazi doctors had done, we sorted out the worst. Found guilty, they were hanged, incinerated, then flown to secret locations where they were given new identities and sent to America to work for the US government. They were able to keep up the good work.

What began as Operation Paperclip in 1947 evolved into and birthed a myriad of nightmare experiments including Project Chatter, Project Bluebird, and Project Artichoke in the early 1950s.

Between 1953 and 1964, under the guise of 149 different projects, the Department of Defense, working with the CIA, gave drugs to thousands of ‘volunteers’, who were clueless as to what was really going into their bodies.

In 1973, CIA Director Robert Helms ordered the destruction of all documents related to these experiments. It was a massive cover-

up. On one hand his order destroyed virtually all damning evidence that the US had participated in and led an activity we condemned during the war crimes. On the other hand, it prevented anyone from ever discovering that, after twenty years of turning young soldiers into pot-smoking vegetables with multiple flashbacks, we found what we wanted.

Before the program officially ended (we don't know if it is really over or just rolled over into some new bundle of experiments), the good doctors were trying manually to create savants.

The vast majority of autistics are not savants. The vast majority of savants are autistic. The few that are not autistic have suffered head trauma.

By studying the brains of savants, one of the things we see is that the blood flow in the left frontal cortex is restricted.

It would not be surprising to discover that, before the CIA bailed and burned all the evidence, autistic people were subjected to brain surgery in attempts to create savants.

It would not be surprising because that has been the alien's goals all along—breeding savants. Their approach of genetic alteration is more patient than ours.

Our make-your-own-savant lab set includes two or three doctors who alter blood flow in the brains of one or two hundred autistics. They don't know how it needs to be altered, only that it does—pretty low odds of success.

The alien team prefers Mendelian genetics. Their doctors, hundreds of them, alter the allele in tens of thousands of people every year. They throw genetic switches that produce autism generally. They know most savants are autistic. They also throw more switches along the track of the double helix so autism is

changed from recessive to dominant. Pretty soon the autism rate goes from 1:10,000 to 1:150 and continues to grow.

The aliens are playing blackjack at the Genetic Casino and, like Rainman, they are counting cards.

In 1950 the Earth's population was estimated to be 2.5 billion people. The autism rate of 1:10,000 produced 680,000 cases. The current crop of 50 savants is harvested from this autistic population, rendering 1 savant for every 13,600 autistics.

In 2010 the world population is calculated at 6.8 billion people. An autism rate of 1:150 generates 45,333,000 cases. At the previous rate of one savant for every 13,600 cases, this base produces 3,333 savants.

If the HCU were to stop poking our peapods now, the number of people with both dominant and recessive genes that produce autism would continue to increase the occurrence rate to 1:100 by 2050. If the HCU continue to plow our peas, the ratio could easily hit 1:75. Think about it: one out of every seventy-five people on the planet could be autistic, requiring special care and education.

Why on Earth would aliens so badly need savants who can, just by looking, say how many matches fell out of a box, that you were born on a Wednesday and, two years from now, your birthday will fall on a Wednesday again?

There is no reason. Not on Earth anyway. The aliens are breeding riverboat pilots, navigators who can move vehicles safely from one port to the next on an ever-changing river of universes.

Mark Twain told of riverboat pilots on the Mississippi River in America's early days when barges, steamships, and pole boats moved continuous streams of cargo up and down the river. At places the river's current, affected by rainfall, snowmelt, and drought, drastically changed the sandbars on the river bottom in

days, sometimes hours.

People did not want their cargo or ships running aground and being lost, so they employed pilots for specific points along the river. The pilot would board, make the captain and crew aware of any changes, then guide the boat toward or away from a swirling eddy or the opposite shore of a muddy river emptying into the Mississippi. In his section of the river, the riverboat pilot was king. He could take boats safely through in the dead of night or in lashing storm. Take him fifty miles up river and he was useless.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

To understand why a president of the United States would sell out his own people, you have to understand what the world was like at the time. After World War II, the political landscape was not at all like it is today. What we now see as empty shadows of Soviet boogeyman were real monsters in those days.

The Soviets had won World War II. If you don't believe this, look at the casualties suffered by the Soviets and Germans on the Eastern Front. Sure Bradley lateraled the ball to Patton and let him make a couple of end-runs. Montgomery tediously nipped along the Western Front, and the 8th Air Force bombed the German war machine relentlessly and without mercy. All of that contributed to the fall of the Third Reich, but the Russians, with their millions of vengeful, battle-hardened soldiers, and their thousands of nonstop, thundering cannons, beat the hell out of the Germans. The Russians didn't stop coming. Kill twenty, thirty, a hundred thousand, not a problem as long as they pushed the red ribbon forward on the map. There were plenty of men, tanks, and artillery. It would be only a matter of time before the Soviet army crashed into Berlin and turned the goose-stepping Wehrmacht into goose-shitting comrades.

The Russians had the biggest army in the world. Just as important, every one of them was on the European continent, their supply lines following railroad tracks back to the second-most-impressive war machine in mankind's history of murdering one another for greed or love. When the war ended, there they sat, this giant Russian bear bristling with cannons, tanks, and bayonets, looking hungrily at the rest of Europe.

Only one thing kept them from rolling through all of Europe:

they did not have an atomic bomb and we did. They knew the British and American navies and air forces would prevent them taking England. If they crushed forward and claimed everything from France to Spain to Greece, it would be short lived. The US would radiate their victorious armies with nuclear bombs, and they would be back where they started. Stalin felt sure he would have an atomic bomb soon with which he could level the playing field. Then he could unleash his brutal bear again and keep what would be easily won.

If you don't believe that during the 1950s and 60s the Soviets were intent on dominating all of Europe, then you either didn't live then, can't read, or had one of those all-too-common college professors who see the world as seen by the intellectual progressives in the early 1900s. All for one and one for all. Tell all the dead Soviet leaders how wonderfully that system worked.

So, the lines were drawn, the Russian bear was given Poland and Hungary and the Balkans to say, "Nice bear, good bear. Thank you for killing all those horrid Nazis."

But the bear kept looking at all that land, people, and industry, and the Cold War was born.

The problem with the Soviet Union was it had no real industrial economy. It was a vast machine for making war. Almost all non-agriculture employees in Russia worked in some weapons-related factory. The Soviets came up with their infamous Five Year Plan. The idea was to gradually shift factories from making tanks and bombs to making clothes, diapers, furniture, shoes, and all manner of goods that they could sell to Europeans and make a profit. Since they controlled the wages, they could easily undersell European competitors.

It was a great plan. After five years it did not work, so they

made some minor changes and extended it another five, and then another and another until it was obvious even to the Politburo it would never work. The reason it would never work is summed up in this famous quote from a Russian janitor who was interviewed by a French journalist in the 60s.

The journalist, who wrote for a French Communist newspaper, noticed the janitor going into a supply room for half an hour at a time. When the janitor came out with broom in hand, he smelled of vodka. He would push his broom for a half hour, put the trash in a large steel drum, then go back into the storage room. Finally the journalist asked the janitor if he felt it was right to work only half the time. The janitor said, "Why not. They pretend to pay us and we pretend to work."

Taken aback and offended by this uncomrade-like attitude, he demanded to see the janitor's boss. The janitor said, "He's in there," pointing to the supply room.

So, like it or not, the Soviets were stuck with a wartime economy that would eventually fail, but it was what they had, so they became the world's greatest rattler of sabers with the philosophy that if we threaten to take over three countries next year but back away from two, then we have a new country and a new year.

Since the Soviets could not do much other than make more weapons and maintain their enormous armies, America, and particularly James Forrestal, was faced with an enormous challenge. How to keep the Russian bear in check while at the same time reducing our military spending? Fortunately, we had the atom bomb and they didn't: for a while.

On August 29, 1949, the Soviet Union detonated its first atomic bomb and things became very serious in the US.

America is a republic. Other than judges, we don't have leaders for life. Elected officials had to keep voters at home happy. All the soldiers and sailors returned from World War II and needed jobs. The America of those days, flush with manufacturing capacity, new techniques, new generations of machines, answered the call, and "Made in America" became a tag seen in every corner of the world. We, not the Russians, made the socks, cars, record players, TVs, and bottled soda drinks that the world clamored for. The economy was busting at the seams, but the government's tax revenue in those days was nowhere near what it was today. The Revenue Act of 1948 set the average income tax rate at a whopping 5 percent.

So somehow, while reducing the defense budget, we had to stay enough ahead of the Soviets to keep them from bullying their way through Europe.

Enter the Truman Treaty.

The beads and mirrors the HUC offered us were just the ticket. In a year we went from being two or three years ahead of the Soviets in new weapon development to a decade ahead. It wasn't like the HUC handed us a laser that would knock an aircraft out of the sky. Instead they provided us key pieces of information that allowed leaps to occur.

We disguised the information as research originating within secret government labs, and invited trusted universities to participate in sure-bet scientific breakthroughs. But even with pieces of the puzzle given to us, it still took time to assemble the information and formulae into theories, data, and tests. The HUC fulfilled their promise, and we stayed a decade or more ahead of the Soviets in everything except rocketry, which allowed the Soviets to win the first leg of the space race with their seventeen-pound beeping satellite, Sputnik. It was a tragic day for American

pride in 1957 when we had to admit this beeping basketball orbiting Earth meant we had lost something to the red-devil Russians, who everyone knew were just waiting to push the button and make America's children file into the school halls or curl up under their desk where they would be safe from the violent nuclear explosion that surely followed the next shrill civil-defense siren.

But the US powers weren't that concerned with rocketry. We had Werner von Braun and the top Nazi scientists, who hurled V-1 buzz bombs and V-2 rockets across the English Channel and pissed of the Brits who, by that time of the war, thought they were through being bombed. The Royal Air force displayed their annoyance by stepping up their nighttime raids of civilian German cities, and firebombed Dresden and a few others virtually out of existence.

The problem was Congress and the American people didn't know about all those alien beads and mirrors. It was as if a single voice of patriotism cried out demanding we win the space race. We were, after all by God, America, and it was fundamentally wrong this great nation should lose anything. So Congress, aroused from their usual stupor, went on a spending spree and funded numerous programs that would put us back into first place. And in their usual lack of oversight or follow-up, they never noticed a great deal of that money went to fund projects they had no idea existed. With the extra money, the HUC research took another great step forward.

The information that came out while trying to catch up to the Russians, who also beat us putting a man in space? Don't worry, your astronaut heroes are safe, the moon landings were real, and most of the technology that put them there was from the Germans and our own scientists. Teflon, Velcro, and the computer

technology were spin-offs of NASA.

The list of things we have today as a result of the Truman Treaty is long, and many items on it are not so benevolent as Velcro and Teflon.

Lasers, masers, and plasma torches leap to mind. The equivalent of the wheel in antigravity propulsion. (It turns out it's not antigravity at all, but manipulation of electromagnetic fields. Einstein loved the simplicity of the theory and died a happy camper.)

Then there is stealth technology. We all saw that secret unveiled in the Gulf War. The next generation is even stealthier. In addition to being almost completely invisible to most types of radar and infrared detection systems, they are also about 90 percent invisible to cameras and eyes.

The new stealth aircraft are powered by one of two types of new propulsion systems, one of which allows the plane to cruise at mach 12 and accelerate to mach 20 in a heartbeat. The other is a tad slower, but makes up for it by allowing the craft to operate as far out as any satellites orbit. Wonder what they have in mind for that one?

Books will eventually be written about each of the technologies born from the Truman Treaty, but this isn't one of them. But there is one technology that has become so vile I bring it to attention for two reasons.

It is perhaps the most despicable weapon ever created. I also threatened to tell what I know about it after the episode where I was nearly roadkill in Lisbon. An e-mail found its way to George Tenet, who was then head of the CIA. The information was about this not-so-secret project with a very secret purpose. It hinted I knew everything about it, and it should be considered a shot across

the bow. The more pressure the SUV drivers put on me, the more information I would release.

The result was another scene of me fleeing from Montevideo because someone was able to trace my untraceable e-mail. So here goes.

The High Frequency Active Auroral Research Program (HAARP) operates a major ionospheric research facility at Gakona, Alaska, and is based on a US Patent issued to Dr. Bernard J. Eastlund of Spring, Texas, patent application number 06/690,354 filed on January 10, 1985.

Conspiracy theorists can't seem to contain themselves on this one. The latest is that the firing of HAARP was the cause of the 2011 earthquake in Japan that brought about the destruction and meltdown of the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant.

The official HAARP website says that it is a facility for conducting research of communications systems in the Earth's Ionosphere. They are not lying. They do this, but they also do a growing number of other, less innocent things. HAARP was originally based on Eastman's patent, and over the years has become a very scary thing. So scary the Russians and a number of other countries have entered the business of conducting research to improve communications systems in the ionosphere above their nations. The project is shrouded in secrecy and misinformation that encourages conspiracy theorists.

Now hear this.

HAARP was started under the aegis of Ronald Reagan as part of the Star Wars Defense Initiative. Please get online and read Dr. Eastman's patent. It clearly states that by sending high-energy radio-frequency signals into the ionosphere we can manipulate the ions to form a plasma shield that can burn out all electronics in an

incoming missile. The area of the shield theorized in the patent is approximately thirty miles in diameter. By placing three different arrays of HAARP-like antennae at specific locations relative to each other and the electromagnetic field's jet stream over the arctic, the plasma can be manipulated to present a shield anywhere within five hundred miles of the facilities.

So, HAARP began as a missile-defense shield. So far, so good. To prevent people from knowing what it really did and then extrapolating what it could lead to, the facility actually does play in the ionosphere to create ways to make sure solar flares don't disrupt satellite communication. That is the official cover story.

The ionosphere is unique in Earth's ecosystem as a place where much of the matter exists as plasma. Plasma is known in physics as the fourth state, the first three being solid, liquid, and gas. Most of outer space contains plasma, making it the most common state in the universe.

This book is not a physics book. If it were, I could not write it. What you need to know about plasma is that during the time of day the ionosphere is exposed to the sun, plasma is naturally generated. At times of solar disturbance it can increase thousands of folds. If you want to know what we can do with plasma today, look up a plasma torch, if you want to know what we can do with it in ten years look up plasma propulsion. If you want to know what we can do with it in twenty-five years watch Star Trek.

The three facilities that comprise HAARP each beam 3.6 million watts of focused radio waves for a total of 10.8 million watts.

What's a watt worth? A 100-watt light bulb uses 100 watts of electricity per hour. In 10 hours it uses 1,000 watts, or a kilowatt hour. To help put this into perspective, the three HAARP facilities together beam 222,000 times more power than the most powerful

radio station. It would take the power production of a nuclear aircraft carrier an hour to equal the amount of energy HAARP's antennae beam into the ionosphere in a fifteen-second pulse. That is a hell of a lot of energy.

As the Star Wars Missile Defense Shield proved its effectiveness in tests, other ideas popped into the heads of the physicists concerning plasma.

Once you start producing plasma, it uses the Earth's magnetic field and helical atomic movement to make itself larger and more dangerous so long as the energy is fed into it. The first results of these experiments were to produce what are known as lightning balls. These sometimes occur naturally on Earth, and are usually associated with earthquakes or volcanic eruptions. Everyday, thunderstorm lightning is plasma, and for a billionth of a second it is hotter than the surface of the sun. If you have seen where lightning strikes in the desert, you can find sand that has been fused into glass.

HAARP was discovered to be capable of producing plasma balls in ever-increasing size and power. But what do you do with a giant, super-powerful plasma ball?

The same thing you do with any ball, bounce it?

The operators at HAARP experimented until they could bounce the plasma ball off stable layers of the ionosphere and send it earthward. But that allowed only playing in the northern hemisphere, so they learned how to bounce it off the moon and gained the power to direct it to anyplace on the globe.

Are you scared yet? Do you want to be? Go to YouTube and search for 'UFO avoids missile.' What you see is documented, NASA—not bogus—footage shot from a shuttle showing a UFO moving toward the Earth. Suddenly it zigzags away from the Earth,

and a bolt of light flies through the space the UFO would have occupied had it not taken evasive action. Just go to YouTube.

So what is so horrible about HAARP? The great minds that ricochet plasma balls off the moon discovered other things they can do with the same facility. To some extent they can control weather in limited areas (limited at the moment). I don't think they have reached the tornado/hurricane/new ice age yet, but they can make it rain marginally more in deserts or less in rainforest.

HAARP probably is not the cause of the 2011 earthquake in Japan. Someday it may be able to encourage shifting tectonic plates or bulging volcanoes to act prematurely.

And oh yes, just for the record, it does a wonderful job of helping to make sure spy satellites are not disrupted by normal solar activity.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

Even with the technology and world dominance gained, not every US president thought the Truman Treaty was a good idea, and several had second thoughts. One in particular was going to do something about it.

President John F. Kennedy made a lot of people angry. He was the media darling of the three TV networks of the day. They broadcast more coverage per viewer hour of Kennedy, his wife Jackie, and their kids than any time before or since. He was charming, arrogant, aloof, disarming, charitable, ruthless, thoughtful, deceptive, innocent, and crafty. Publically it seemed every politician in Washington liked him, even Republicans. Privately, many from both sides of the aisle waited, spiders in webs hanging in every congressional office, ready to trap and wrap him at the first opportunity.

Kenney had two other attributes that made him great: intelligence and vision. One made him a living legend, the other a resident of Arlington National Cemetery.

Kennedy loved intelligence and mental nimbleness. He read several newspapers at breakfast, and often played word games and puzzles. He kept himself razor sharp and admired brain power in others. Everyone who regularly socialized with JFK had to be on their toes. Well, almost everyone. There was Marilyn. She probably wasn't on her toes when the two of them socialized. But I hear she was actually smarter than people give her credit for. One thing for sure, Kennedy trusted her. Kennedy was smart enough to know that he was the 'Peoples' President', and so long as he remained so, he would remain in office. This knowledge gave him the courage to act on convictions.

Kennedy's vision is what caused him trouble.

JFK strongly supported his little brother, Robert Kennedy, in his role as US Attorney General. When the New York Times and The New Republic questioned Robert's appointment to the position because he had no experience in state or federal court, his big brother quipped, "I can't see that it's wrong to give him a little legal experience before he goes out to practice law."

RFK was a pit bull in his attacks against organized crime (the 50s and 60s were the heyday of the crime lords and godfathers), the corruption among union leaders, and the only true 'untouchable' at the FBI: J. Edgar Hoover. President Kennedy encouraged him to move forward in reining in these forces. Even when political pressure was brought to bear on the president, he never blinked, not once. This endorsement made both the Kennedy boys unpopular in Washington social circles that rippled out, gathering more mass to crush these sons of Irish immigrants.

While RFK tempted powerful fates, JFK made other enemies.

When Kennedy took office, the US had less than 100 CIA spooks in Vietnam gathering information and keeping us informed of developments on both sides. In 1961, Kennedy sent 400 Special Forces soldiers to help train South Vietnamese officers to fight a defensive war against Uncle Ho and his Viet Cong. Kennedy clearly understood what would happen if South Vietnam fell to the communist north: there would be an Asian holocaust as neighboring countries fell like dominoes. Kennedy initiated a number of presidential initiatives and congressional programs that led to 50,000 troops being deployed by 1965. Eventually, over 800,000 American boys would become disillusioned with their own government, and America would lose its first war. Vietnam was never a popular war. From the very beginning politicians, media, and college kids questioned Kennedy's motives and began

chipping away at the walls of Kennedy's Camelot. On the other side of the Pacific, the same people who kept trying to assassinate the leaders in Saigon didn't take to the idea that the tyrant had a friend with a lot of guns. At home and abroad, Kennedy took some shots about sending troops to support a puppet democracy. Kennedy's vision proved accurate: nearly six million people were slaughtered and bulldozed into mass graves in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia after we deserted the people we went to save.

Then there was the Bay of Pigs. Fidel Castro made monkeys out of Congress, and not only kept the US from supporting Batista, but also received a little covert help from us. Then he shows up in New York smoking big cigars to speak to the UN delegates who can't believe they get to live in America and America is paying for it.

Castro talks about imperialist pigs, capitalist dogs, and weak moral degenerates that lack will, and how the nurturing caring that is communism will change Cuba into a paradise. Ten years later it is a bankrupt country with failing infrastructure and surviving from aid from the Soviet Union given in return for a port for Russian subs. The best job you can find there, outside of being one of Castro's communist barons, is prostituting yourself to the Russian sailors who come into port smelling of cabbage soup, looking for rum, and waving thick wads of rubles (worth about $3.50) wanting to get laid in this new tropical paradise.

In the interim, between Castro's speech at the UN and the smelly Russian sailors enjoying the paradise, there were two major incidents: the Bay of Pigs and the Cuban Missile Crisis, both under Kennedy's occupancy of the White House.

The Bay of Pigs was essentially a CIA operation approved and supported by Kennedy. The idea was simple: if Cuban exiles from Miami could establish a beachhead in their native country, the US

was honor-bound to make sure they were not massacred in their homeland (read as the US would bomb the shit out of the Cuban military and send troops so the exiled freedom fighters could take back their sugarcane fields and resume their profitable business with Coca Cola.) The only problem with this is Robert Kennedy convinced his brother the Cuban exiles were partially funded by organized crime who would take back their Cuban casino businesses before the first cane was made into syrup. President Kennedy also had knowledge that not only was the CIA aware of criminal involvement, but that august organization had courted it from the beginning.

The bottom line is JFK was pissed. He pulled the plug on official US follow-up support of the invasion of Cuba, and the exiles who left Miami Beach wished they had stayed home.

More and madder enemies are the outcome for the Kennedy boys.

The Bay of Pigs is pretty well known. One of Kennedy's actions as president is not so well known: Executive Order #11110 of June 4, 1963. Kennedy's vision saw something in the future, something politicians did not want to deal with in 1963, and don't want to deal with it today. He saw the eventual devaluation of the American dollar.

Failing to receive enough Congressional support to even have his idea introduced in Congress, he did what all presidents do when they can: issue an Executive Order. 11110 was really an amendment to 10289, an Executive Order created by Harry Truman.

Essentially, 11110 makes the Department of the Treasury, specifically the Secretary of the Treasury, the only entity authorized to issue US currency, and this currency must be backed by silver.

Had this order come to fruition, the privately owned Federal Reserve Bank would have been put out of business, today we would all be working for silver-backed money instead of Treasury Notes, and Congress would not have driven the national debt beyond more than we could afford. This was an elegant way to insure stable and responsible spending by politicians.

By November of 1963, Kennedy was dead. By November of 1968 all currency backed by silver was taken out of circulation and sold to collectors for more than face value. Obviously, the number of Kennedy haters increased when the President's pen signed good ol' 11110.

The final straw that pushed at least one of JFK's enemies to action was the problem of UFOs.

President Kennedy had a public UFO experience as a college student. He and forty other people watched a UFO for three to four minutes off Cape Cod. The object was clearly visible and close enough that some detail could be seen.

He had a second experience in the cold Pacific waters the early morning of 2 August, 1943.

Today most people don't remember John F. Kennedy as a World War II hero. He commanded an 80-foot, fast-patrol torpedo boat, the PT 109. Earlier on the moonless night of 1 August, PT 109 idled on one engine to prevent Japanese aircraft from spotting its wake. A Japanese destroyer, the Amagiri, returning to Rabaul where it deployed supplies and 900 troops, was full speed ahead trying to make it back to base before sunrise brought death from above in the form of American fighter bombers.

PT 109's crew had about 10 seconds from the time the destroyer's bow raced out of the pitch blackness and cut their small boat in half around 1:00 AM on 2 August, 1943.

Making a heroic swim, towing a badly burned sailor, Kennedy led his small group of survivors to a small island three and a half miles from the spot of the collision. It was only one hundred yards in diameter, and had no food or water.

Japanese were on all the larger islands in the area, so Kennedy and his crew hid by day. On the next night, Kennedy swam another two and a half miles to an island he suspected had coconut trees. After arriving on this island and confirming it had coconut trees, he rested an hour, then started his swim back.

While not infested, the waters were the hunting grounds of both sharks and saltwater crocodiles. Halfway back to the island occupied by his crew, Kennedy paused to tread water and listen. After a few seconds of looking in all directions, he noticed a submerged light moving toward him and rising toward the surface.

It passed under him and emerged from the water about one hundred yards away then hovered a few feet above the sea. The light looked about five feet in diameter and glowed dull red, much like the combat lights on a naval ship. Kennedy remained as motionless as he could in the gentle swells. After ten or fifteen seconds the light moved toward Kennedy, circled three times a few feet above his head, then shot straight up until it vanished two or three seconds later. Kennedy made it back to the island and fell asleep, exhausted, with the rest of his crew. The next night he led his men to the other island, where they lived on coconuts for six days before being discovered by two Australian coast watchers in a dugout canoe.

None of Kennedy's men had seen the light.

During the presidential transition, Eisenhower made Kennedy aware of the Truman Treaty and alerted him that he was troubled by the inherent wrongness of keeping this from the American

people. He told JFK he planned to warn the country in a veiled and obtuse way that they had something to worry about. This became the famous Military-Industrial Complex speech.

Eisenhower's second experience with UFOs is one of the most striking in all UFO reports. His first experience, though much less dramatic than the second, somewhat prepared him for what was to come.

During World War II, while commanding all the allied armed forces in Europe, Eisenhower was briefed several times that US and British pilots were being tracked by unidentified aircraft. The common thread in the reports from hundreds of pilots was that the object, a metallic shape without wings, would match the pilot's speed and course, follow for a while from a distance, then gradually come closer and hold course. No maneuver could shake the strange craft. It stayed in a fixed position relative to the fighter or bomber. After a while it streaked off, sometimes straight up, at incredible speeds. The problem became big enough to reach the desk of British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, who met with Eisenhower on this subject and directed Eisenhower to keep a lid on these stories. US and British air force generals were told to verbally instruct all division and squadron commanders to order pilots to never again discuss these events.

You may have read stories of Eisenhower's second crossing of paths with aliens. You may also be confused by the writers of those tales. Eisenhower did meet with aliens on the night of 20 February, 1954 at what later became known as Edwards Air Force Base. He did not sign a treaty with the grays. Truman did that. In fact, Eisenhower did not even meet with grays. He met with another race entirely who don't approve of the grays. Physically, this group is closer to our own height, thin but muscular, have a slightly bluish cast to otherwise white skin, have white hair and

oversized noses. They essentially looked like Scandinavian Jimmy Durante crossed with Smurfs.

This group had come to warn us about the grays and to help us extradite ourselves from the Truman Treaty. They told Eisenhower exactly what the grays were up to and what it would eventually do the human population on Earth.

The Smurfs wanted to trade our not working with the grays for training in their spiritual technology. They flatly refused to help us build weapons or other technologies. Needless to say, we bowed out of that offer and continued down the Gray Brick Road.

The sad thing about this is we were not sufficiently advanced in quantum physics to understand what the Smurfs offered. We refused heaven and kept hell.

Kennedy admired Eisenhower. He may have been one of five men who could tell this story and have Kennedy believe it. If what Ike said was true, the Truman Treaty was a bad deal with bad people: well not people. The more information Kennedy gained (and it was not easy even for him to find details) the less he liked it. The president of vision saw something, something evil, something wrong, and decided it was time to come clean with American people.

We don't know everyone who knew the president's intentions, probably not many. Robert Kennedy knew JFK wanted to blow the whistle. And at least one other person knew—Marilyn Monroe. Whoever it was, someone spilled the beans and at 12:30 PM (CST) on 22 November, 1963 the people at Dealy Plaza in Dallas, TX saw JFK's brains blown out because someone believed he was about to tell the world that, "We are not alone."

It wasn't long before someone figured out that Marilyn Monroe and Bobby Kennedy may know more than they should and they

too fell victim to the SUV drivers.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

I have never met Melanie. I have seen photos and read reports. It is hard not to like her.

Melanie has not spoken a word in the ten years since she was still-born. The first time most people see her they assume she has Down's syndrome complicated by autism. The few people who work with her know better. Though she never speaks, they 'know' when she wants something. Ask them and they will tell you it is not words or pictures that come to their mind, more a sense—a 'knowing'—that she needs a specific thing.

Most of the day she sits on a Hello Kitty pillow in the middle of a muted hooked rug, aligning then realigning cat's-eye marbles. She has a pink, draw-string bag containing about one hundred marbles, but she always chooses nine to play with. Not always the same nine, but never more or less.

Though Melanie does not speak, she is not mute. Music plays softly in her room. She is calmer when music plays. It doesn't matter if it is rock-and-roll, salsa, classics, or marching bands so long as it is not loud. On rare, random occasions she hums a tune in perfect pitch exactly as she heard it. If the tune is played again and a single note is changed, her humming catches and duplicates the changed note. Play a long piece of music, change ten, twenty notes, it does not matter. Melanie never misses a beat. She does this while aligning marbles.

"School" for Melanie is two 'classes' a day. Each may last ten minutes or several hours depending upon her engagement. She usually sits studying and realigning her marbles and seems not to notice the stimuli used to tempt her participation. No one knows

what might trigger her interest. The teachers and caretakers try everything: visual, sound, motion, objects, images, smells, tactile contact, music, film, TV, other kids, other adults, the list is virtually endless. On rare occasion she will engage. Her first response to a stimulus was humming to music. When she was encouraged to hum to music she showed no interest whatsoever, but now and then, something clicks and she hums her perfect tunes in her little-girl voice.

Once she reacted at the end of a National Geographic documentary. Her caretaker felt she wanted a pencil and paper pad. The caretaker placed them on the floor next to the marbles. Melanie pivoted on her pillow, picked up the pencil, and began doodling disembodied shapes and shadows at what appeared to be random places on the paper. Three hours later she went to the bathroom.

Returning, she plopped down on Hello Kitty and started replacing the nine marbles that were out with nine from the bag. The sketch pad contained elements from the TV documentary, drawn perfectly and in amazing detail. The Eiffel Tower, pyramids at Giza, Empire State building, Statue of Liberty, the Mayan pyramid at Chichen Itza, Great Wall of China, and a dozen other famous things from the National Geographic TV show. These were the main elements, and each stood out from a background of indigenous people, animals, houses, and plants. The drawing filled an 11” x 17” sheet from edge to edge, and was a stunning, almost photographic rendering of what she had seen. The most incredible thing about it was that when a map of the world as seen from orbit was projected on it, each major element was placed geographically correctly.

Melanie was the straw that broke this camel’s back.

I have never met her. I have seen three photos of her taken at

various ages. Her copper-colored hair is cut short and oddly thin. Melanie's head is a little too large, too round, making her chin look more pointed than it is. Her trunk and limbs seem too long and thin. Her small nose and mouth make her large eyes look bigger and farther apart than they are. Other than that she has a sweet, kindhearted look. It is hard not to like her.

She actually looks more like an anime character than someone with Down's syndrome. Because of my involvement in all of this, I knew the instant I glanced at the first photo of Melanie. She is a hybrid.

How she came to be is the last straw for me. Now hear this.

Melanie's mother and father were stationed at Travis Air Force Base north of San Francisco Bay in 1998, the year Melanie was born. In her third month, Mom tells the doctor about strange dreams where little people come in the night and examine her. She tells the doctor the little men don't talk to her but she knows they want to make sure the baby is alright. The doctor laughs and accuses her of eating too many pickles at bedtime and tells her not to worry about it. A nurse in the room hears the story and retells it to a friend at the officer's club over cosmos. The friend tells it to someone in her office who is into reading about abductions and he e-mails friends about it.

It didn't have to be an e-mail. It could have been a text message or a conversation on a cell phone. Do you know about the government program to intercept terrorist communications? I will tell you a little.

The system appears simple. In a small office in a government building in Kansas City, Missouri a man works with a keyboard and a monitor. The walls are lined with shelves containing various numbers of every component necessary to build a computer like

the two in the center of the room.

Each one is about the same size as a Maytag washing machine. The two computers are linked to each other so they each know what the other is doing but only one, Prime, works at a time. The backup only works when Prime has a problem.

The man has two functions: monitor the internal performance of Prime and keep it functional. Occasionally, when a part has to be upgraded or replaced, the man transfers operations and the second computer becomes Prime until the work is completed.

Cables run from the computers into the conduit in the wall then down to below street level and emerge from another wall more than one thousand miles away. A wireless, secure, satellite-transmission system exists in the Kansas City facility, but is only used in emergencies.

This is the heart of a system that monitors every cell-phone call, text message, and e-mail sent anywhere in the world.

I do not know where the cables emerge from the second wall, but I have an idea of what happens there.

Voice-recognition software is used everyday. Every time you call a service and the automated voice ask you to say ‘yes’ or ‘back to main menu’, you are using the technology. Well, a rudimentary version of it.

Someone operating the Prime computer provides it a list of words or phrases to find and report. Prime translates that list into about 100 languages and then listens to cell-phone calls and reads text and e-mails. Nothing is safe.

As incoming messages trigger key words, Prime assigns priority codes. The number of trigger words in a message, the language in which the message was communicated, and the locations of the sender and receiver all figure into the priority.

The prioritized messages are read, cross-referenced with previous communication, and reported to the CIA, FBI, and the Pentagon, again, using secure hard lines.

At the Pentagon the list is subdivided by type and distributed to a number of departments.

What the FBI, CIA, and Pentagon don't know is there is a fourth place that receives messages with a special set of keywords. This is the place that received the e-mail about Melanie's mom's dreams. This instigated an initial investigation, which led to the assignment of the special doctor and nurse who are engaged in a secret government program to create psychic warriors for the future. None of the babies they steal are really intended to be psychic warriors. They are currency in the negotiations with the HUC.

By the time Melanie's mom is at six months, her doctor is transferred to Afghanistan and the nurse that handles the sonogram has already been replaced. The new doctor is young, a graduate of John Hopkins, and Mom feels good about the change.

The delivery is unusual. Melanie's mom is having problems, and it is all she can do to hang on. She has little inclination to focus on her surroundings. The only people she would have recognized in the delivery room are the young doctor and Nurse Sonogram.

She comes out of the anesthesia. Her husband is red-eyed, sitting by her bed. The doctor tells her what the husband already knows. Her baby died at birth. Later, after she recovers, the doctor explains how sometimes these things happen. Later still, she is allowed to see a dead baby. The funeral is tragic: the tiny coffin, the canned service by a base chaplain. Melanie's mom went home wondering about all the things she did wrong in her life to cause

this.

Melanie is alive and well. She, the young doctor, and nurse were choppered to an unknown location, which is Melanie's new world.

It is bad enough to have placed all this on Mom's shoulders. Worse still, someone else's baby was murdered so Mom would have a body to bury.

I am too old. Twenty years ago, reading the reports and typing the summary, I would have been annoyed at the arrogance of the people who could do this. Now, it makes me angry—angry enough to do something about it.

It turns out Melanie is a very special little girl. She is the trillion-dollar jackpot on the alien slot machine. Rolled into one small, Hello Kitty-loving, ten year old is a being with the potential to fill all three seats necessary to navigate craft safely between dimensions.

Melanie is the only one of her kind so far. Statistically, she is the winning ticket in a cosmic lottery where it requires a half page of zeros to show the odds. With the HUC improving their genetics program the odds are in freefall. At some point the HUC's medical teams may better target humans having genetic tendencies and improve their manipulations to where one out of ten efforts produces a winner. At that point, human economics will center on raising and training the winning numbers.

For the present, the HUC seems content to produce a child competent to fill one of the three seats. Melanie is the triple-crown winner.

But what are they winning?

The HUC needs, for lack of a better phrase, flight crews: entities with incredible focus and memories. Each crew consists of

a person on Harmony, another on Photography, and finally, a Detailer.

Using HUC craft that move with dimensional portal fluctuations (doorways), the flight crews are plugged into machinery. Literally, they are plugged in. In addition to recycling and oxygenating their blood, providing nourishment and providing waster, their brains are plugged into portal translation devices that allow them to see, feel, smell, virtually touch the ever-morphing fabric of quantum nothingness between dimensions.

Portal is a misnomer. This area of various forms of radiation and energy fields can connect to millions of dimensions. The connection ranges from a powerful singularity that nearly pulls other dimensions into itself to frail, weak, and fragile signs that only whispers hints of a doorway. For now, we will stick with portal.

Portals to discovered dimensions are recorded. Their Harmonics, light fluctuations, radiation, and fields are played into the flight crew's minds. Using their senses and talents, each crew member searches the ever-shifting portal to find the one set of criteria that matches what in on the recording. Once the crew member has it, they lock on and determine at what point the portal's rhythm will exactly match the recording. When all three crew members coordinate synchronization, the craft projects electromagnetic plasma that stabilizes the portal between two specific dimensions. Viewed from either dimension, the doorway appears to open and close in a blink. In reality, the HUC craft freezes time in that bit of space long enough for other craft to pop through.

Pop is not an oversimplification of what happens. The craft traversing dimensions 'pops' out of one and into another. Now you see it, now you don't. Now someone somewhere else sees it.

All craft are designed with navigational devices that direct their ‘pop-ins’ to previously known points. This usually results in the craft appearing in orbit around a specific planet or plasma cloud or wherever the craft is going to trade, mine, or conquer. Sometimes things go wrong and the craft appears in space beneath a planet’s surface, or under a sea. This can result in the pop being followed by a ‘snap, crackle, crunch.’

It’s quite possible the UFO downed at Roswell was popping in or out when the Rainbow Projector disrupted the navigation device and they popped into the ground.

So creating the humans and other life forms that can find and open portals is essential to the HUC’s economy. The good news is they have become quite good at doing this.

The bad news is that, for reasons unknown to us, we believe the flight crews have relatively short lifespans once they began manipulating portals. The HUC accepts this as a cost of doing business. It’s likely they have genetic or some other mutating operations taking place on anywhere from thousands to millions of planets in every parallel universe where life has been discovered.

While Melanie would be the champion Portal Crew member of all time, that’s not the reason she is so valuable. If they were able to clone her genetics, they might improve their mutation programs to a success rate that tripled the number of flight crew members available from the same quantity of genetic farming.

At least the illuminati in our government believe this, and have sequestered Melanie as the prize chip in any future negotiations.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE: N. Fairfax Drive, Arlington, VA

"Missing aircraft," one of the younger Team Intercept members called out, leaning back and rubbing his eyes.

As Kate approached, he continued, "N321DC. Flight plan from Huntsville to Miami. It dropped off Pensacola radar over the Gulf. That was about three hours ago."

"Good job," Kate said, patting his shoulder and leaning closer to see the screen.

She stood erect and said to the young woman to her right, "Heather, find out who we have in Huntsville, get 'em on the phone and patch them to my headset."

Turning back toward the display nearest her she said, "Okay, what do we know about that….?"

Tom Cray cut her off from his worktable. "N321DC is registered to the Merit Electronics Corporation."

"… plane," she finished her sentence then added, "Shit. Double shit, shit, shit. That old fuck has half of Congress at his troughs." She paused, thinking, then added, "Why would Charles Merit have anything to do with this?"

Tom hit his enter button and said under his breath, "Something goes missing that causes the greatest manhunt in recorded history and the same day a multibillionaire's plane drops off the radar and vanishes. Coincidence? I think not."

Kate's headset buzzed. "Heather, please get me what we have on Mr. Merit," she said, before turning her attention to the FBI agent in Huntsville, Alabama.

Before she hung up the phone, Tom started talking, “N321DC, it’s a Falcon 900. It can cruise at 600 miles per hour, give or take, and has a range of 5,000 miles with internal and can be extended another 2,000 with external tanks. Which means there are a lot of places they can pop up.”

Kate gave a great sigh and dialed TLS. This was not going to be fun. Before he finished saying ‘Hello,’ Kate waded in, filling in the details and ending with the suggestion Homeland Security engage Interpol to monitor all aircraft landings within a 7,000 mile radius of Mobile, Alabama.

Then, just like clockwork, TLS began a barrage of questions to which Kate had no answers or she would have already told him. Once he understood she did not have the answers, his next ploy was to ask for her best guess to a particular question, then Kate would tell him speculation usually leads to wasted time and money and he would raise his voice two levels thinking that this time it might impact Kate. It never did.

Tom had pulled up some data on Merit. He had to admit if Merit was involved in this and James Tate was behind it, then Tate kept powerful company. He wondered what Tate could have possibly offered Merit that would make him risk imprisonment.

“Guys,” Kate announced, “I’m leaving normal duties with the FBI center for the time being. I want all of you to go home, get some rest, then be back here in eight hours.” She looked at each of them, “We are going to be in for the duration once that plane lands.”

As they stood up to leave, Kate opened the file on her desktop. The PDF document was so sensitive it had been put together by one of the government’s scribes, maybe even Tate himself. A red stamp across the top of the first page read, ‘Congressional

Influence,' another stamp, this one purple just below the red one read, "Presidential Influence."

The title of the paper was Charles Winston Merit.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWENTY-SIX: Aboard N321DC

Jim Sees had fallen asleep as the three-engine jet slashed through the air over the Gulf of Mexico. When he woke, he stood up to use the toilet and noticed the other passengers were all asleep except for Merit, who was engrossed in a thick book titled The Arms of Krupp.

When he came out of the toilet, Charles Merit was looking at him. The white-haired man smiled and winked then went back to his book.

Sees sat, raised the shade on his window, and looked down. Thirty thousand feet below him clouds appeared as white islands on a sea of green. Ten thousand feet below the clouds was an endless, green carpet covering everything to the Earth's curved horizon. As he studied the piece he saw through his small porthole, Jim made out occasional rivers and tiny clearings that might have been towns or villages.

"The world is different from up here," Charles Merit said softly, his northern Alabama accent sounding the last work as 'he-ah'. He did not allow Jim the opportunity to respond, "It almost makes me believe in God."

Jim looked at him, trying to decide what, if anything, he wanted to say.

Merit locked eyes with Jim and offered his annoying little smile that made him look wise and smug at the same time. "If I was God, this is where I would be when I wanted to look at my garden." Merit pointed a finger at the view beyond the window. "When you get too close you see all the bugs eating your creation."

“And we are the bugs?” Jim asked, leaning toward the side of the plane to put a little distance between himself and this man who would be God.

“On no, Mr. Sees. We aren’t that big in the scheme of God’s garden.” He looked at Jim to see if he seemed interested in hearing more. He didn’t, so Merit rose and turned to go back to his seat.

“What are we then?” Jim Sees surprised himself when that question tumbled out of his mouth.

Merit bent back down and said, “Why, Mr. Sees, we are cells in the bugs’ bloodstreams. Civilizations are the bugs.”

The cockpit door opened and the pilot approached Merit. They were landing in an hour. Merit nodded and returned to his seat.

Fifteen minutes later Merit moved from seat to seat waking everyone up.

He allowed them time to make trips to the toilet, grab water or juice from the refrigerator, and generally shake the cobwebs from their brains. He retrieved a metal briefcase from a cabinet, placed it on the countertop, and snapped open the latches.

“Okay, folks, we’ll be landing in a little while and it is time to give you your survival kits.”

Everyone but Melanie, busy with her small crystal ball, waited with anticipation.

Merit removed a stack of 9 x 12 manila envelopes from the case. Each had a name written in marker on it. He said, as he moved from seat-to-seat distributing each to its new owner, “Inside there’s identification documents—the most important is a passport—as well as credit cards, driver’s licenses, business cards, old movie tickets, all the stuff you might find in a purse or wallet. There is also a sheet explaining your new identities. Take some time now to learn who you are.

“Be thorough,” Merit continued. “At the very least, if we are lucky, we will have to clear Columbian immigrations to get out of the airport.” He paused and added, “This is important. If we are still here when the people looking for us find out where we are, we are all going to be very unhappy.”

Jim opened his new passport. He was now Mr. Robert Werner from Parma, Ohio. He had grown up outside of Cleveland and knew the area, so he felt he could wing any questions about his residency. He was also a technical writer for the computer company SAP. He studied the rest of his documents and placed them in the used wallet that gave the envelope its thickness. When he was finished, he felt a little comfort because it looked genuine.

The plane had taxied into a hangar for private aircraft, and a Columbian official waited at the foot of the aircraft’s door steps.

Jim quickly concluded Columbian drug lords and their customers don’t relish waiting in immigration and customs lines. So, at the Bogota International airport, passengers on private jets were afforded their own detachment of immigration officials.

Jim and Merit were at the aircraft door. Everyone else was at the foot of the stairs having their passports examined by an official with a UV flashlight. Merit said, in his deceptively soft southern voice, “Y’all go to the pick-up area. Look for a driver holding up a sign that says ‘Sr. Werner’. That’ll be you.” He smiled then added, “He will take you to a hotel. Get on the Internet. Nice knowin’ you.”

Jim saw a fuel truck pulling into the hangar and a ground crew preparing the Falcon 900. Jim understood. Merit was out of here, his part done.

He turned toward Merit and asked, “Why?”

“Made a deal. Owed a guy a favor. My word is my bond. Now

we are even," Merit said and stuck out his hand.

"Well, thank you I suppose," Jim said releasing the handshake and heading down the steps.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN: N. Fairfield Rd, Arlington, VA

Tom Cray knew it was over for now. He knew the powers that be would bluster, pose, and demand action, but so long as Tate and his crew of kidnappers remained silent there was very little chance of discovering anything more.

They learned, several hours too late, that N321DC had landed in Bogota, Columbia. Four people deplaned and cleared immigration and had been picked up by a hired limousine driver who took them to the Hotel Dann Carlton.

N321DC refueled, filed a flight plan to Lisbon, Portugal. From there it flew to Cyprus. Flight records indicated the plane had remained there, but it was gone.

The four people had checked into the hotel, picked up a package at the desk addressed to Mr. Werner, and gone to their two rooms. The next morning the two men, a woman, and a redheaded girl ate breakfast and boarded a bus providing historical tours of Bogota.

That was the last anyone had seen or heard from them. A maid cleaning the room the two men stayed in found identification documents in the trash can: passports, driver's licenses, credit cards, and various other documents for Mr. Werner and each of the other three.

Kate Hollister was happily refocusing on more important technical snooping: ferreting out terrorist threats instead of virtually chasing a nun and a little girl around the world. The filters were set to trigger and reactivate the kidnapping investigation. Kate knew eventually something would throw the switch again. Try as

she might, she could not imagine how finding the woman and the girl could take precedence over terrorist threats. In the scheme of things, how important could they be?

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

My name is Jim Tate. I decided when my wife died that Einstein had been right about living: life is worth living only if you have someone to live it for. I decided when Crypto, the best dog that ever tolerated me, passed on, it would be more important to tell this story than to live out what is left of my life in lonely resentment over the time I wasted with my career and not with my family. I was a good government man for almost four decades. I did what I was told and kept my mouth shut. No more.

You are ready to learn the bottom line. Now hear this.

It turns out our tribe did not sell our planet to the colonists for beads and trinkets. We sold it for drugs, the kind that generates unbelievable wealth and power. Once the new science and technology was shot into our political veins, we were hopelessly hooked. The black SUV squad had a busy second half of the twentieth century. Anything that threatened the continuation of the Truman Treaty was dealt with swiftly and severely. No one was exempt, not even President Kennedy.

By the time Eisenhower gave his famous Military-Industrial Complex speech, we knew alien experiments on sleeping victims were increasing annually. Six months before Kennedy was assassinated, we knew the alien goal was to genetically alter the human race for their own purposes and that one of the side effects would be to increase the number of people born with autism by five hundred to a thousand times. It was only after President Bush and Rumsfeld were stood up in the high-desert night that we realized we had been cut off. Cold turkey. No more new toys to feed our addiction.

Human nature is often to suspect the worse of fellow men. It

naturally follows not only should we know non-fellow men are at some point going to break their agreement, but just knowing they will makes it okay to break the agreement first. Hence, knowing the HCU would break our treaty (which they did not, they simply let it expire and did not show up to renew it) we spent a few decades improving the Project Rainbow projectors and developed new energy-based weapons in preparation for the day the HCU would cross us.

So now you know everything about how we came to be where we are. Why we are here and what we are going to do about it are uncertain.

The best theory for the 'Why' of it all goes back to how the aliens came here in the first place: nuclear detonations disturbing parallel universes. Without going into quantum mechanic details (which I couldn't anyway) here are the basics.

Every universe is connected to dozens (maybe thousands) of other parallel dimensions. Myths from every culture contain stories of abductions and heroic trips to other worlds. Granted, the crossing from one dimension to the next was usually accidental and more often than not ugly things found their way to our side of the dimensional fence. Distilling these stories to common elements, we find dimensional crossings are almost always accompanied by booming, bass sounds, musical (though not necessarily pleasant) notes, strange light displays, earthquakes, solar alignments, and electromagnetic activity.

Imagine all of these elements are involved in a connection between dimensions. Further imagine these elements are constantly fluctuating relative to the specific connection and to each other. A single doorway to another dimension might randomly open for a few seconds before the fluctuations close it for another 13 billion years.

Now imagine two or three autistic savant riverboat pilots stationed in a craft between dimensions with equipment capable of manipulating the fields and forces that allow dimensional connections. Each operates a machine, each remembers precisely the patterns of sound, light, and energy that culminate in opening the door between worlds. Their job is simple: keep this one door open. Keep it open so a never-ending stream of cargo continues to flow, feeding unimaginable colonial expansion into billions of universes.

I was a good government man. What a waste. If I had my life to live over I would have had more children and kept less secrets. I'm too old to father more kids, so I guess I'll just keep less secrets until the SUV pulls up outside.

CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE: A New Home

There is an orphanage that has two new residents; an autistic, red-haired girl named Melanie, and a new teacher named Sister Fran. This is the second wonderful gift from God in the same year. Only a few months earlier they received electricity, so now the children have light at night, don't have to carry water from the well, and someday soon a very generous man will send them a computer. The children are very excited about receiving the computer.

Most of the children in the orphanage are normal, fun-loving, homework-hating, put-your-chores-off kids. There is one, Crista, who looks a lot like Melanie. She is autistic and does not talk either. They came together like two peas in Mendel's pod.

At night, when the two play with their sets of crystal stones, some claim to have seen a soft glow in their room.

About the same time Melanie arrived at the orphanage, men sitting outside smoking after dinner claimed they saw strange, glowing lights near the peaks of the sacred mountains.

7 July, One Year Later

I am not sure I will ever return to the United States. It's very beautiful here, and things are working out very nicely. Just like 1947-07 promised.

We stayed at the orphanage for nearly a month. At first it was boring beyond belief. Well, for myself and Mr. Blue.

Sister Fran, who spoke fluent Spanish, took immediately to teaching the children. They ranged in age from infant to fifteen. She taught English and French to all ages, and math, physics, and world geography to the older kids.

Melanie and Crista were like long-lost twins who never spoke. They became inseparable and extremely adept at performing feats of ‘magic’ using their sets of small crystal balls. I actually saw one that involved placing the nine balls, the largest in the center, in the tic-tac-toe layout. They hummed their tunes and worked their hovering hands in circular motions until the crystal balls began to vibrate, then one by one they rose from the floor. As they took on a glow, they formed a circle of about a foot diameter and slowly circled the larger center crystal. The glowing balls faded in and out of existence for two or three minutes until the girls allowed them to slowly come to a stop and let gravity have its way. They seemed to smile at each other.

Sometimes, late at night, Melanie and Crista sit cross-legged on their beds playing with their crystal marbles. They say you could see the glow coming from under the door.

Three times after these episodes men would come from the mountains to talk to Mother Superior. Without giving away too much, the area’s ancient myths testified to a place of oracles. It was high in the mountains, not terribly far from the orphanage. When the indigenous people were conquered, the shrine built to the oracle was destroyed.

I occasionally take weekend trips and camp in a valley below the oracle’s ruins. I bring no electronics. It is a quiet, unplugged sort of place. I learned to meditate there, which has helped me enormously to work through all the choices I made that cost the loss of so many years of my life and my family. Two or three times, while asleep in my tent by the oracle, dreams came to me. In them someone spoke to me, maybe the oracle: I can believe almost anything at this point. The voice told me things about myself, things hidden so deeply the only sign of their existence was a swath of self-destruction. These dreams introduced me to my real

self and somehow, just knowing the truth allowed me to bring it to the front of my thoughts and address it. I feel much better now.

I stopped going on the oracle overnighters. It felt like too much, too soon. My emotions were vibrating like high-tension wires. It took some time and help from Sister Fran to deal with the dark things rising in my soul. The next and last time I went to the oracle was on a field trip with Melanie, Crista, and Fran.

Sister Fran had come down from the orphanage to take care of weekly business in the village. As was our custom, we were breakfasting on the patio of a small café.

"Melanie made me aware she wants the two of us to take her and Crista to the oracle this Thursday," Sister Fran said as she picked up her tea and blew across its surface.

Sister Fran was always cautious to phrase her conversations with Melanie and Crista so that she did not give the impression either of the girls had actually spoken words.

I understood that Melanie never actually spoke, and knew that if she ever did, Sister Fran would make such a case of it that there would be no doubt about the mode of communication.

"Did she say why?" I asked, taking a slow sip of the rich, powerful coffee. So special was the coffee here that I quickly gave up first cream and then sugar.

"I didn't ask," Sister Fran said. "Melanie hardly asks for anything anymore now that she and Crista have each other, so when she requested this outing I knew it is important to her."

Sister Fran picked up her pastry and, just before taking a small bite, said, "We have to go Thursday morning. We can come back Friday morning."

On my previous journeys to the ancient sacred place, I had the luxury of time, and since I do not have a vehicle at my disposal, I

alternately rode and walked two burros up the mountain tracks.

“Have you borrowed the truck?” I asked, knowing the orphanage’s fifteen-year-old Ford F-150 was the only way for us to go there and back so quickly.

“Yes.” Sister Fran took a draught of tea, looking around the small village square with a cautious eye for people who do not seem to belong. “I’ll pick you up at 10:00 AM,” she said, then quickly added, “If you are in, that is.”

The paranoid residue of the ordeal that brought us to this place was receding, but it was not gone. It may never leave us completely. I found myself glancing around corners, covertly studying people passing through the village.

I climbed into the truck’s passenger seat Thursday morning. The girls didn’t mind being crowded together on the truck’s single seat. Once we cleared the village, Sister Fran drove like a NASCAR dirt-track racer.

We arrived in the early afternoon. Fran spread a heavy blanket on the ground for the girls to sit on while I unloaded the truck. I erected two tents, then poured a glass of water from the ceramic pot lashed in the pickup’s bed.

Fran made two fires: one for cooking dinner, and a larger one for warmth against the night chill.

It had been a clear day, but by the time the light faded enough to reveal the amazing spectacle of the stars, dark, bruised clouds hung about the mountaintop and descended toward us as the temperature dropped.

Fran and I cut and hauled some large logs to the big fire, as the clouds would bring cold mist and the flames needed to be robust to generate enough heat to keep the mist off the wood.

Dinner was sandwiches made with local sausages and bread.

After dinner we lit the lanterns in the tents and waited for Melanie to let us know when it was time to move to the oracle. The girls sorted and re-sorted their crystal spheres. Sister Fran read a thin book, which was treatise on St. Thomas Aquinas's writings about angels. I sat on the tent floor looking outside at the fire's flames flickering in the thickening mist.

About 10:00 PM, Melanie and Crista stood and put on their plastic ponchos and stood just outside the tent waiting for us.

We formed a single-file line of hooded figures, barely visible in the lanterns' light. As we moved up, the temperature dropped, and the mist might as well have been rain. I led the way with one lantern and Sister Fran brought up the rear of our tightly spaced group holding her lantern high enough keep her eyes on the girls as much as the ground.

What should have been a fairly easy fifteen-minute ascent to the spot that marked the oracle turned into a half hour of making sure each step was secured against the slippery rocks and wet mud. At one point I thought we had missed it then, for the first time, I felt Melanie in my head. "A little farther." As Sister Fran had said, it was more a feeling than a voice.

We reached the small plateau on the mountain's side that holds the oracle. The cloud and accompanying mist made it impossible to see, but I felt its presence.

About thirty feet before reaching the cliff facing containing the oracle, Melanie and Crista stopped. They held hands, then looked at us.

"Stay here," Melanie's creepy communication instructed. This was my first experience with Melanie talking to me. Quite frankly, I didn't like it. It felt alien.

Sister Fran said, "No, honey, we need to come with you."

“Stay here,” came again, stronger this time. I don’t know if I could have followed if I tried, but I let the two girls slowly fade into the grayness.

Fran stepped up to be by my side.

“You okay?” I asked, using my hand to wipe the water off my face.

“Did you feel that?” Fran asked. I found myself speaking very loudly. A deep tone had built its volume so slowly I just now noticed it had dampened all other sounds.

“That!” Fran shouted and braced herself against an unfelt wind.

Then some miniscule force sliced through my body at the speed of light. It was not there, then, a fraction of a second later, it moved through me and was gone almost too quickly to notice.

Through the rain, where I supposed the girls stood at the oracle, a soft, blue light pulsed, barely visible in the mist and fog. At first the pulses were slow, one every two or three seconds, and the brightness of the electric-blue light waxed and waned. Each pulse was faster and brighter than the one before it. At some point, when the bluish light created a strobe effect, I could see the girls holding hands before the oracle, their free hands’ palms flat against the slick, wet surface. I tried to move, but all I could do was watch and wonder if the light came from the oracle or the girls. It was not possible to tell.

After the first dozen pulses that shot through my body, I became disoriented and a little nauseous with each new and more powerful bolt that cut through me.

The bluish light, now complimented with magenta, clicked on and off so quickly it almost seemed constant. Its magnitude continued to increase.

A pulse ripped through me and I nearly collapsed with vertigo.

Sister Fran dropped to her knees and clasped her hands in prayer. She was shouting, but the continuous bass tone blocked all sound now.

The powerful blue light, now mixed with flares of magenta and neon green, seemed to ignite. If it had been bright before, it was now unbearable to see. It was like staring directly at the sun on a desert noon. My eyes slammed shut, but even so the afterimages took on a solid realness. I could see the pulse moving toward me in extreme slow motion now. It was a thin, vertical line brighter than the rest of an expanding bubble. Somehow I knew that Sister Fran saw her own thin line of energy coming directly at her. Even in super slow motion it came at me fast. Just before it hit me I flashed on a memory.

Have you ever been in an earthquake? They are not all the same. The oddest earthquake experience I had happened twenty-something years ago on the beach in Acapulco, Mexico. I had just stood and was brushing sand off my swimsuit when two things happened. I felt a slight feeling of dizziness, and out of the corner of my eye I caught movement.

Turning my head to see up the beach, the palm trees were now swaying. They were shaking violently back and forth three or four times, then they came to a stop. It was if the shaking trees were charging toward me. The next thing I saw was people performing balancing acts on the beach, some more successful than others. Finally I saw the hump in the sand. It was a small mound, maybe a foot high and three feet wide. It emerged from the ocean, ran across the beach and onto the golf course above. It moved at tremendous speed. Just before it reached me I could see grains of sand dancing a foot into the air above the mound. As it moved beneath my feet I was downed like a student surfer on Hawaii's north shore.

The earthquake on the beach was nothing like the line of energy speeding toward me. It was, however, the only experience that even relates to the pulse.

When it hit my body, it split me. I was me on the left and also me on the right. The subatomic particles where the force split me were flung away from the line and, as it passed, they panicked, like the sand grains on the earthquake hump, trying to restore their balance. As the light passed beyond my body it sealed the split, but in the joyful reunion of particles there were tiny differences. I fell, not knowing when the fall had started.

The next think I remember was the feel of Crista's soft hand on my shoulder. She gently pulled, physically imploring me to rise. My eyes opened and I saw Sister Fran still locked in prayer with Melanie stroking her face soothingly.

We made it back to the tents. Neither Fran nor I spoke the whole way back. The kids went into their tent and climbed into sleeping bags. Sister Fran had planned on sleeping in the pickup truck's cab but changed her mind and brought her sleeping bag over to my tent and settled in.

I loaded the fire up with wood and climbed into my bedroll, thinking I would have no sleep tonight. About a minute later I was out like a light, a blue, pulsing light that took me to faraway places.

The next morning we packed up and headed back to the village. Sister Fan and I passed the time speaking of mundane things. It was several weeks later, at our favorite coffee shop, before we finally began to exchange stories about that fantastic night.

As I said, it's beautiful here. I have a house on a beach. My book royalties are deposited in an account on the Isle of Man. The advance on my new book swelled the balance to ten times its highest previous amount.

I sent the first three chapters and outline for this book to my publisher. They loved it, hence the advance check that led to the house on the beach.

The best news of all is next month my ex-wife and children are meeting me for two weeks in Fiji to celebrate my one-year anniversary of sobriety.

It turns out 1947-07 was right about everything except Melanie. Watching Melanie and Crista perform their magic, thinking about how valuable they are to the HUC, I wondered why the aliens didn't just abduct Melanie when she was still in Virginia, or why not right here. Then I figured it out. The aliens' genetic program created something they didn't expect; something of which the sum is greater than its parts. They are afraid of her.

Yesterday, over bread and coffee, Sister Fran told me that Crista was beginning to communicate with her in the same manner as Melanie. Sister Fran felt this was some kind of breakthrough.

I am happy the girls don't communicate with me often. I find it a creepy experience, and some part of my consciousness wants to reject it on the grounds that if they can put things in my mind, they can take things out.

The big news Sister Fran had for me is Melanie and Crista told her together. It was one communication in her head but she knew it was both girls. They told her soon everything will be perfect. Their sister is coming.

THE END